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THE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN DRYDEN

VOLUME I

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The poetical works of John Dryden.
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LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING
1843

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MUSICAL SOCIETY CLUB
OF PHILADELPHIA

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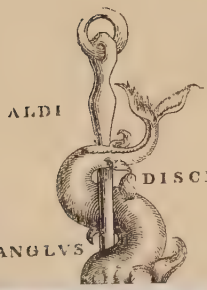

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THE LIFE OF DRYDEN.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN MITFORD.

THE biography of Dryden was not composed by any of his contemporaries, nor were any materials collected by them which could throw light on his opinions and sentiments, which could inform us of his personal habits, or afford familiar sketches of his private and domestic character. The little that is to be found in the narratives of his life has been gleaned from occasional notices in party pamphlets, and satirical libels, or from what has incidentally been mentioned by himself. Doctor Johnson, who composed the first authentic life of our poet,[1] complained that nothing could be known of Dryden beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition supplied. Since that time many mistakes have been rectified, and omissions supplied, by the diligent researches of Malone; and we are now probably in possession of all the information which it is possible to produce. Sir Walter Scott has justly founded his narrative on the facts recorded in Malone's biography; while he has taken a more comprehensive view of the genius and writings of the poet, and the influence which he exercised on the literature of the age. When we therefore consider the fairness and felicity of Johnson's critical disquisi-

[1] The Life of Dryden, in the Biographia Britannica, preceded that by Dr. Johnson, being published in 1747--66.

tions; the truth elicited, or errors rectified by Malone's diligence; and the lively, interesting, and instructive narrative of Scott, we may justly consider that Dryden has been fortunate in his biographers. It is to be hoped, that in the present more compendious memoir, the facts are stated with accuracy, and that the opinions on the different productions of the poet are formed with the care, and delivered with the temperance and respect which are due to the reputation of so great a writer.

John Dryden, the poet, was the eldest son of Erasmus Driden, and Mary, daughter of the Rev. Henry Pickering. It is supposed that he was born on the 9th of August, 1631, but no diligence of inquiry has hitherto been able to discover with exactness the place or date of his birth. He has himself told us, that he was born in a village belonging to the Earl of Exeter, and A. Wood has added, that the village mentioned by Dryden was Aldwinckle, in Northamptonshire, not far from Oundle. His age is best ascertained from a passage in the preface to his fables, where, speaking of a gentleman of eighty-eight years of age, he observes that, by the mercy of God, he had already come within twenty years of that number. This preface was *probably* written in November, 1699, thus placing his birth in the latter end of the year 1631. The family was originally settled in Cumberland[1]—a marriage of John Dryden, of Staffhill, with the daughter of Sir John Cope, in the early part of Elizabeth's

[1] David Driden, or Dryden, married the daughter of William Nicholson, of Staffhill, and was the great-great-grandfather of our poet.

reign, brought them into possession of Canons-Ashby, in Northamptonshire;[1] and, subsequently, in the reign of Charles the First, they were proprietors of the Chesterton estate in Huntingdon. John Dryden, the poet's cousin-german, frequently represented that county in parliament, between 1670, and 1707.

Dryden received the earlier part of his education at the small school of Tichmarsh. He was afterwards removed to Westminster, and admitted a king's scholar, but at what period is not exactly known. He remained some years under the tuition of the venerable patriarch of schoolmasters, old Busby, was then elected to one of the scholarships of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was admitted under the Rev. Mr. Templer, and was matriculated on the 6th of July following.

During the time he was at Westminster, he translated the third Satire of Persius, a task imposed upon him by Busby, it is said, from a conviction that Dryden possessed talents equal to the difficulty of the subject. In 1649, he joined some other poets in a volume called 'Tears of the Muses, or the death of Henry, Lord Hastings.' His lines are uncouth, and rugged in their measure; they have the forced conceit, unnatural thoughts, and false wit of the time, which Donne and Cowley had borrowed from Jonson and rendered fashionable;—but they are not wanting in sense or cleverness; and are curious in their early

[1] A. Wood says, that John Dryden was a schoolmaster, and that the great *Erasmus* stood godfather for one of his sons. He appears to have been a puritan; in his will, he bequeaths his soul to his Creator, with this singular expression,—'The Holy Ghost assuring my spirit that I am the elect of God.' These puritanical principles descended to his family.

display of the native bent and disposition of Dryden's mind. He could not restrain himself from argument and satire, on a subject that would have induced most youthful poets to luxuriate in elegiac complaints, and to indulge themselves in florid descriptions of departed excellence; more especially to enlarge upon that incident which gave a romantic interest to the death of Hastings; its taking place a day previous to that which had been designed for his marriage: the names of Marvell, Denham, and Cotton are found in the list of contributors, and R. Brown was, I believe, the collector of the volume.

Some commendatory verses were prefixed by Dryden to the poems of John Hoddesden, in 1650, which Malone has inserted in his life. The four lines which I now extract, give no promise of the correct ear, or command of language, that was hereafter to give such harmony and variety to the English couplet, as no succeeding poets have ever excelled, and even Pope himself scarcely hoped to rival:

> And, making heaven thy aim, hast had the grace
> To look the Sun of Righteousness i' th' face,
> What may we hope, if thou goest on thus fast,
> Scriptures at first, enthusiasms at last.

During his residence at college, nothing concerning him has been recorded, but that he suffered a temporary disgrace for disobedience and contumacy.[1] His name does not appear in the list of the contributors to the verses which the university composed upon public occasions; he

[1] Malone has given the order for putting Dryden out of commons, from the Conclusion Book, in Trinity College, see p. 221. 'That J. Dryden be put out of commons for a fortnight, at least; and that he goe not out of the college,

obtained no fellowship, but he took his bachelor's degree at the regular time in January, 1653, and was M. A., by dispensation, in 1657. Malone accounts for his not contributing to the Oliva Pacis, in 1654, from his being absent from college, to attend his father in his illness. Owing to some cause of dislike, with which we are not acquainted, he never in after life mentioned his university with affection or respect. In one of his late prologues, a contrast unfavourable to Cambridge is thus strongly portrayed:

> Oxford to him a dearer name shall be,
> Than his own mother university;
> Thebes did his green unknowing youth engage,
> He chooses Athens in his riper age.

That this compliment to Oxford was as sincere as it was elegant, has been doubted or denied by Dryden's contemporaries; and he is accused of having ridiculed, among the wits in town, that learning which, on the Banks of Isis, he had mentioned with reverence and esteem; but the charge, I believe, is unfounded; amid the poetical and political squabbles, petty intrigues, libels, lampoons and satires of the time, it is not safe to take assertion for truth.

By the death of his father, our poet succeeded to an estate in Blakerly, in Northamptonshire. Two thirds of the whole were devised to him, worth about £60 a year, and one third to the widow for the term of her life. Ten sisters, and his three brothers, were provided from a separate

excepting to sermons, without express leave from the master, or vice-master; and that at the end of the fortnight, he read his confession of his crime, in the hall, at dinner time, at three fellowes table.'

bequest of about £1200. The old gentleman is supposed to have been a zealous and severe presbyterian;—some of Dryden's political adversaries asserted that his family were anabaptists, but it is reasonably supposed that the accusation was one incapable of proof, and that the term of 'bristled baptist' was a calumny, invented by those whose enmity was too bitter to be always accompanied by truth.

Dryden had now nearly attained his twenty-fourth year, and was in possession of his patrimony; yet he appears without reluctance to have retired to the restraints and seclusion of an academic life. He had a cousin, Honor Driden, who was a rich and celebrated beauty. The youthful poet was attracted by these combined charms, and paid, though unsuccessfully, his addresses to her. She sent him a present of a silver inkstand, which he 'received from her fair hand,' and which called forth, in 1655, the next slight specimen of his poetical powers.[1] Here he runs a parallel between the excellencies of his 'fair Valentine,' and the properties of sealing wax:

> You fairest nymph are wax. Oh! may you be
> As well in softness as in purity,
> Till fate and your own happy choice reveal
> Whom you so far shall bless to make your seal.

Having now resided seven years at Cambridge, he removed to London about the middle of the

[1] In Malone's note on the date of this letter, is a highly amusing instance of his persevering and minute exactness. The lady had erased the two latter figures, 16(55), *lest they should discover her age*, but Malone, by viewing them through a *microscope*, rendered her caution vain, and convicted her of being 18. Dryden's Prose W. ii. p. 3.

year 1687. That he was obliged to quit the university, from having traduced the son of a nobleman in a libel is supposed to be nothing more than the calumnious assertion of a mean and enraged antagonist. He had resided for three years beyond the usual period, and we should rather inquire what could have induced him to remain so long: at any rate, it is an unsupported charge, coming from a very suspicious quarter.

Dryden [1] settled in London under the protection of his kinsman Sir Gilbert Pickering, a stanch republican, who was nominated one of the king's judges in 1649, and who was one of the thirty-eight councillors of state named by the Rump parliaments to supply the place of the executive power after the king's death. Our Poet is said to have been clerk or secretary to his kinsman—that he was a member of one of the committees—a sequestrator or committee-man, does not, I think, clearly appear; for the words from which

[1] In a satirical pamphlet, 'The reasons for Mr. Bayes changing his religion,' 4to. 1688, p. 14. The following passage occurs alluding to Dryden at the time—Bayes. 'After some years spent in the university, I quitted all my preferment there, to come and reside at the imperial city, because it was likely to prove a scene of more advantage and business, and likewise because it was the fittest place in the whole island for a monarch to settle his court, issue out orders for his subjects at home, and entertain a commerce with his allies abroad. At first I struggled with a great deal of persecution, took up with a lodging which had a window no bigger than a pocket looking-glass, dined at a threepenny ordinary enough to starve a vocation tailor, kept little company, and clad in homely drugget, and drank wine as seldom as a Rechabite or the Grand Seignior's confessor. Much about this time, Mr. Crites, as you may well remember, I made my first addresses in panegyric, and to Oliver Cromwell,' &c.

Malone draws his inference seem to me to bear a different interpretation, and to refer rather to his protector, than himself. He is said to have favored the sects of anabaptists, and independents, whose religious opinions some of his relations had zealously adopted. In 1659, he published his heroic stanzas on the death of Oliver Cromwell,[1] which were subsequently joined to those of Waller and Sprat. They consist of thirty-seven stanzas, written in the measure, and somewhat in the manner of Gondibert. The flow of his versification was improved, and his command of poetical language more extended, but he still confined his ambition to subtleties of thought, quaint allusions, and unexpected combinations of remote images. His ideas are labored, and his inventions curious. No marks are yet discovered of the luxuriance of early genius, or the overflow of a mind full of poetry: nor are there any traces in his language from which we may collect that his curiosity had been directed to the study of the great poets who flourished in the preceding age. His poetry was in the general style of the times in which he lived; it did not partake of any individual character, nor was it controlled by any presiding genius. It

[1] The first edition, 1659. 4to., is extremely rare. The full title is 'A Poem upon the death of his late Highness Oliver, Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland, written by Mr. Dryden, London, printed for William Wilson, and are to be sold in Willgard's, near little St. Bartholomew's Hospital.' This edition does not materially differ from later, excepting that the spelling is modernized and the title abridged. Many years after one of Dryden's mean and malignant antagonists reprinted this Elegy with the hope of making Dryden appear an apostate. The title is An Elegy on the Usurper Oliver Cromwell, by the author of Absalom and Achitophel.

shows rather a vigorous understanding, and quick discernment, than a rich imagination, or a fancy lavish of its youthful stores. How little does it resemble the early poems of Milton, which were published but a few years previous to this time.

Some of the stanzas, as the xxviith are false in taste, and forced in analogy; others display a purer system of thought, a greater strength and solidity of versification, and language more appropriate to the subject. Waller and Sprat both employed their genius on the same argument. Sprat wrote in Cowley's long Pindaric Strophes, and in Cowley's style of ingenious conceits and quaint unnatural flights. Waller's was a poem of a different kind, the most manly and nervous of all productions. It is no disgrace to the youthful poet to assert, that the prize of writing has been adjudged to the veteran bard, yet the victorious poem has little in it worthy of being envied. 'It is singular,' says Scott, that of those distinguished poets who solemnized by Elegy the death of the Protector, Dryden and Waller should have hailed the restoration of the Stuart line, and Sprat have favored their most arbitrary aggressions upon liberty.

When the restoration took place, his kinsman retired without much loss, to his native county, and Dryden, now left on his own resources, hastened, in conjunction with his brother poets, to efface all memory of his former delinquency, by publishing his Astræa Redux in 1660. His Elegy on the Protector was never owned by him in the collection of his works, though not forgotten by his enemies. This poem is written in the taste and feeling of the former, one line

> [1] A horrid *stillness* first *invades* the ear,
> And in that silence we a tempest fear.

has been much ridiculed for the incorrectness and supposed absurdity of the thought; but I think it successfully vindicated by the reasoning of Johnson. Silence is a privation; and yet the poets give it an active influence and power over the mind—Simul ipsa silentia terrent—are the words of one whose exquisite propriety of expression and correctness of thought are yet unrivalled. 'Some of the similes,' says Scott, 'are brought out with singular ingenuity;'[2]—one of the defects

[1] Captain Radcliff has ridiculed this line in his News from Hell.

> Laureat, who was both learned and florid,
> Was damned long since for silence horrid.
> For had there been such chatter made,
> But that *his silence did invade:*
> *Invade*, and so it might, that's clear,
> But what did it invade?—an Ear!
> And for some other things, tis true
> 'We follow fate, that does pursue.'

The term 'invading the ear,' Dryden has used in Theod. and Honoria.

> 'With more distinguished notes *invades his ear*.'

[2] Dryden was habitually careless in some of the provinces of his versification, the following incorrect rhyme occurs in this poem:

> Our healthful food the stomach labours *thus*,
> At first embracing what it straight doth *crush*.

In one of his prologues.

> Mangos and limes, whose nourishment is *little*,
> Though not for food, are yet preserved for *pickle*.

And in that to Albumazar,

> Here he was fashion'd, and we may *suppose*
> He liked the fashion well, and wore the *clothes*.

In Iphis and Ianthe,

> My parents are propitious to my *wish*,
> And she herself consenting to the *bliss*.

of Dryden's early versification is in the frequent use of the verb 'do' in its different tenses: it occurs in a very displeasing manner in this poem; and indeed was never fully aside, (for it requires some ingenuity to avoid, and some courage to resist its insertion) before it fell beneath the correcter taste, and more fastidious ear of Pope.

At this time, Dryden is supposed to have lived at the house of Herringham, in the New Exchange, then the principal publisher of poetry and plays. A friendship, for some time, had been formed between him and Sir Robert Howard, 'who (he says) had been always careful of his fortune and reputation,' and whose sister, Lady Elizabeth, he subsequently married.

In 1661, he addressed some lines to the king,[1] on his coronation, and on New Year's Day wrote a poem to the Lord Chancellor Hyde. In the fol-

In the cock and the fox,
The time shall come when Chanticleer shall *wish*
His words unsaid, and hate his boasted *bliss*.
Juv. 6th Sat.
The gaudy gossip when she's set *agog*,
In jewels drest, and at each ear a *bob*.
Denham rnymes 'transform'd' to 'return'd,' and 'Sprung' to 'Rome.'

[1] There is an animation of language and an energy of style, it is said, in this poem, yet mixed up with the conceits of his preceding productions. The following couplet could not be easily surpassed in the works of Flecknoe and Shadwell:

A Queen near whose chaste womb, ordain'd by fate,
The *souls* of kings unborn for bodies wait.

'If, says Sir Walter Scott, the souls of any unborn monarchs waited for bodies from Queen Catharine, they waited long in vain;' perhaps it was not her fault, for, as the same writer sensibly observes, 'for a woman to bear children, it is necessary that some one should take the trouble of getting them.' See State Poems, vol. iii. p. 14.

lowing year, he prefixed some verses to Dr. Charlton's account of Stonehenge; in this latter poem, the ruggedness of his former versification had been softened into elegance and harmony; his quaint allusions and elaborate conceits had disappeared, and many of the lines are pleasing both in thought and expression,[1] as—

> And happy men, who danced away their time
> Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime;

and 'the nightly visions of the Danish race' seem to open, for the first time, into the regions of the imaginative and the picturesque.

The poem to the Lord Chancellor approaches more closely to the metaphysical style of Cowley and his contemporaries, than any other of Dryden's compositions. Scott ingeniously conjectures that Dryden professedly wrote after the manner of those poets with whose works the Chancellor had formerly been acquainted; in fact, that he strove to please, by bringing again before the eyes of the aged statesman that glitter of sentiment which had delighted him in his youth.[2] Johnson says Dryden never after strove to bring on the anvil such stubborn and unmanageable thoughts.

In all the poems which Dryden had hitherto

[1] 'To taste the *fraicheur* of the purer air,' is an affected and unnecessary gallicism. Dryden also uses veillard, paillard; and, in Pal. and Arcite, 'that conscious *lawnd*,' from the French 'Launde;' he has 'Semigres,' for affected contortions in the Story of Acis. In his Life of Virgil, he has 'fierce of the services,' for proud of the services, 'fier des services,' &c.; but in revenge, 'en revanche.' The poet who flourished in the scene is damned in the *Ruelle*, &c.

[2] The following fine couplet is in this poem:

> Envy that does with misery reside,
> The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.

published there are marks of carelessness and inaccuracy in the versification, too frequent a repetition of the same rhymes, and, as I before observed, a most offensive and frequent recurrence of the expletive 'do;' perhaps they derive their chief value from the proofs which they afford of the alteration in poetic feeling that had commenced, and of a purer taste and manlier style superseding the false wit and glittering conceits that had charmed so long; he was shaking off the incumbering earth, and 'pawing to get free.'

The metaphysical productions (to use the common phrase) of Cowley and Donne, their wild unlicensed flights and strange inharmonious lines, once so admired as to eclipse even Milton's fame, now found but few imitators.[1] Waller, and especially Denham, had looked back on Fairfax and our elder poets with advantage, and had shown that a simpler and easier style, a more melodious and smoother system of verse might be attained without much difficulty. The light and sprightly manner of Suckling in his ballads and smaller poems was much admired. In Marvell true poetry might be found; nor must some of Withers's earlier notes be forgotten, though lost too soon by him. They were full of the simplest melody, the sweetest music. It was the gentle voice of his captivity, wild pastoral songs that beguiled his

[1] Dryden calls 'Waller the father of our English Numbers,' he says, he mentions him for honour's sake; and that he is desirous on all occasions of laying hold on his memory; and thereby acknowledging to the world, that unless he had written, none of us could write.' See Pref. to Walsh's Dialogue. Fenton says Waller spent the greatest part of a summer *in correcting a poem of ten lines*, those written in the Tasso of the Duchess of York; Denham and Waller, says Prior, improved our versification, and Dryden perfected it.

imprisoned hours, and then were heard no more. Dryden had evidently looked with somewhat of admiration or affection to the poetry of Davenant, and notwithstanding the ridicule of the wits, and with the confession of much that is absurd, and more that is tedious, Gondibert[1] is the work of a man of powerful intellect, and fine genius; it is full of fanciful images, ingenious reflections, and majestic sentiments: Hobbes has praised its vigour and beauty of expression. Davenant indeed, in all his poetry, throws out gleams of loftier and brighter creations, pathetic touches, sweet pensive meditations, imaginative and visionary fancies, and lines that run along the keen edge of curious thoughts, such as commanded the attention of Dryden beyond any other poet of the age, and such as long after Pope was not too proud to transplant into the most impassioned, and the most imaginative of all his productions. This early style of Dryden, or Davenant, is chiefly faulty, because the authors have not the courage, or inclination to reject an ingenious allusion, however remote, or a brilliant thought, however superfluous. Hence the surface of their poetry glitters

[1] I am glad to support my humble opinion by the great authority of the author of Marmion; Sir Walter Scott says, 'Gondibert incurred, when first published, more ridicule, and in latter times more neglect than its merits deserve, an Epic poem in elegiac stanzas must always be tedious, because no structure of verse is more unfavourable to narrative, than that which almost peremptorily requires each sentence to be restricted, or protracted to four lines; but the liveliness of Davenant's imagination has illuminated even the dreary path which he has chosen, and perhaps *few poems afford more instances of vigorous conception and even felicity* of expression than the neglected Gondibert.' Scott's Dryden, vol. iii. p. 97; and Life of Dryden, vol. i. p. 48.

with similes,[1] is crowded with learned analogies, and surrounded with unnecessary illustrations; whatever is subtle, laboured, and unusual, is forced into the subject. The interest of the story is encumbered with imagery, and the progress of the narrative impeded by reflection. Davenant himself confesses, that 'Poetical excellence consists in the laborious and lucky resultances of thought, having towards its excellence as well a happiness as care, and not only the luck and labour, but also the dexterity of thought, rounding the world like a sun with unimaginable motion, and bringing swiftly home to the memory universal surveys.'

The restoration of the monarchy now opened the gates of the theatre, the latest echoes of whose walls had been called forth by Shirley's muse: and which the narrow prejudices, and dark religion of the Puritans, considered as one of the practices offensive to God, and not to be endured by a serious and godly people. Dryden soon availed himself of this new channel to profit and fame. 'The first play (he says) I undertook, was the Duke of Guise, as the fairest way which the act of indemnity had then left us of setting forth the rise of the late rebellion, and of exposing the villanies of it upon the stage, to precaution posterity against the like errors.' His friends however considered his first essay as not wrought with sufficient art to ensure success, and it was in consequence laid aside for some years.

[1] Now here she must make a simile, where's the necessity of that, Mr. Bayes? Because she's surprised. That is a general rule, you must ever make a simile when you are surprised, 'tis *a new way of writing*. Rehearsal, act i. sc. 3.

Dryden's first attempt at dramatic poetry, or rather his first play that was exhibited, was the 'Wild Gallant.' It was probably produced on the stage the 5th February,[1] 1662-3. The want of success was, perhaps, compensated by the favorable influence of the celebrated Countess of Castlemaine, afterwards the Duchess of Cleveland.[2] More than once, Charles commanded it to be performed before him; it was more distinguished for the smartness of its repartee than for the skilfulness of the plot, and its 'prize fights of wit' have been ridiculed in the Rehearsal.[3] There is in the Wild Gallant a strange improbability of incident, and a bustling intrigue taken from the Spanish drama. The character of Isabella is immodest and loose. The absurdity of the gross deceit attempted to be passed on Lord Nonsuch probably turned the fate of the play. Seven years afterwards, when it was corrected and revised, that this part was not omitted nor remodelled is surprising. Constance's marriage,

[1] On the 19th November, 1662, Dryden was elected a fellow of the Royal Society, which is supposed to show his early reputation for knowledge. Cowley and Denham were also admitted into it. See Birch's Hist. of the R. Society, i. 125, 127.

[2] Dryden addressed some sprightly and gallant verses to her on her encouraging this play, Scott's ed. vol. xi. p. 18. He compares her influence to the virtue of Cato, 'But you have done what Cato could not do,' which is very true; for she slept with Charles II. the very first night he arrived in London, nathless, our poet says,

> Your power you never use, but for defence
> To guard your *own*, or others *innocence*.

[3] In the scene betwixt Prince Prettyman and Tom Thimble Bibber, being the original of the latter personage. Some part of the character of 'Trice' is imitated from that of Carlo, in Jonson's 'Every Man out of his Humour.'

under the character of Fortune, has been properly reprehended as unnatural and grotesque. The second prologue is very indecent, and the looseness of the dialogue offensive; but this is a fault pervading most of Dryden's plays. It has been vainly attempted to turn the blame from the poet to the audience, though it has been urged by his critics and by himself—'that those who live to please, must please to live.' I wish that so heavy a charge had met with a better exculpation.

Having failed in his first attempts at comedy, which he discovered 'was the most difficult part of dramatic poetry,' Dryden's next performance was a tragi-comedy, called the Rival Ladies,[1] which was publicly exhibited in the winter of

[1] This play was with propriety dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, himself the first writer of rhyming plays after the Restoration. The flatness and insipidity of his language is ridiculed in Timon, a Satyr. Buckingham's Works, i. p. 163.

Half wit cries up my Lord of Orrery.
Ah! how well Mustapha and Zanger die;
His sense so little fired, that by one line
You may the other easily divine;
—'And which is worse, if any worse can be,
He never said one word of it to me.'—
There's luscious poety, you'd swear 'twas prose,
So little on the sense the rhymes impose.

In Mustapha, p. 105, Solyman says,

(*Sol.*) Forgive her, Heaven!—here—take my handkercher,
Dispatch!—why do you pause?—(*Rox.*)—forgive her, Sir.

The play of the Black Prince was spoken by the genius of England, holding a *trident in one hand, and a sword in the other.* Lines similar to the following often occur:

You know, when to the wars of France I went,
I made a friendship with the Duke of Kent.

Herod says to Solemus,

This storm which thou hast rais'd, dost thou not dread?
Look on me—look—*have I not stared thee dead?*

1663. The tragic scenes of the play are written in rhyme,[1] while the lighter are formed into blank verse. Dryden has earnestly defended his practice with arguments, rather ingenious than convincing; for, if admitted, they would censure or condemn not only some of the finest passages in our 'old Cothurnal scenes,' but the system on which their poetry was founded, and the end which it aspired to attain; but in truth, our heroic verse in rhyme is most adverse to the exhibition of dramatic passion, or powerful and changing emotion. It leads the poet into long unbroken declamation, and totally precludes the abrupt transitions and bold rapid movements, by which true and strong feeling is declared. Nothing is left for the genius of the actor, in look, in gesture, in the eloquence of silence to supply; or for the imagination of the audience to assist; nothing to strike on the chords of association in our mind; nothing imperfect and halfdrawn that calls upon the fancy to fill up the unfinished picture, and gives it a share in the creations of the poet. Here surely lies much of the fascination of poetry. At the first breath heard from the enchanted horn, when touched by the lips of genius, all becomes

Tamar. Permit me first, Madam, to dress your wound.
Queen. It is a scratch, and is already bound.

In this moving manner the noble author goes through a folio volume, and receives the highest commendations from Mr. N. Tate. In his Comedy of Mr. Anthony, there was a duel between Mr. Nokes and Mr. Angel; one came armed with a *blunderbuss*, and the other with a *bow and arrows*.

[1] The dedication to Lord Orrery is composed in a strain of laboured and ingenious flattery; there are two mistakes in it, one relating to Gorboduc, the other, that Shakespeare *invented blank verse*. He praises Waller, Denham, and Davenant, and defends rhyming verse.

inspiration and illusion; the scenes and shadows of ordinary life disappear; a light not borrowed of the earth glitters over the new creation; every power of nature starts from its repose, and the feelings of the mind waken from their slumber, to hasten into the magic circle in which they are invoked. The key that opens the paradise of poetic creation is placed in our hands: language itself changes its ordinary form, and kindles into impassioned eloquence, and *then* showered from the urn of phantasy appear

The thoughts that breathe and words that burn.

In these plays rhyme was not simply an additional ornament, that, like fringe upon a garment, might be removed without injury; it did not constitute merely a casual part of the vehicle in which the sentiments were conveyed, but it was intimately connected with the structure of the drama, for it removed the dramatic imitation farther from nature, and thus rendered the extravagant sentiments and improbable incidents less offensive; like an harmonious glazing to a picture, it served to keep all the poetic colours in tone. With the disuse of rhyme, an alteration took place in the other constituents of the drama, in the sentiments, the figures, the language, the incidents, and the general principle. I am not aware that Dryden, and the other poets of the heroic school, availed themselves of the power which they possessed of breaking up their verse into irregular pauses, thus giving a greater variety to its intonation, and a bolder and less monotonous character. This has been adopted with success by the actors on the French stage, where the verse with difficulty admits it, and when such an alteration in the man-

ner of delivery was not anticipated or provided for by the author.[1]

In this play is to be found the bustle, the intrigue, and the disguise of the Spanish plot. The scene between Hippolyto and Amelia (act iv. sc. 3.) is ludicrous and absurd. Perplexities arise without any reasonable cause; and difficulties are solved without any probability of circumstances. The plot is concluded, not by a skilful combination of events gradually closing and conducting to the developement, but by an unnatural transfer of affection in the heroines of the drama, suddenly huddled up in the concluding scene. The jealousies and partialities of love at once subside; which had been sustained under perplexity of adventure, artifice of disguise, and variety of situation. Dryden has taken advantage of every form of ornament and every vehicle of expression which our language could afford; for the play is composed of prose, blank verse, the rhyming heroic couplet, and the quatrain.

He now assisted his friend Sir Robert Howard,[2]

[1] Cibber mentions that Sandford, the actor, used to throw the cadence on different parts of the line, in order to avoid surfeiting the audience by a continual recurrence of rhyme. Scott's Life, p. 96.

[2] Dryden has prefixed some lines to a volume of Sir R. Howard's Poetry; they have but little reference to the subject to which they are addressed, and a person would in vain search the poems of the author to discover sufficient materials for so splendid a eulogy. The observations which Dryden makes on the Achilleis of Statius, and of the additional beauties conferred by the translator, show either that he was ignorant of the poem (one of the most beautiful and elegant fragments of antiquity, with golden lights from Virgil's brighter day still hanging on it), or that in his anxiety to praise, he was careless of the truth. Few poems are more spirited and interesting than the original; none more utterly worthless than the translation.

in the Indian Queen. What proportion of the play was written by Dryden cannot be ascertained with exactness; but as the versification is superior to that of Sir Robert's other dramas, it is probable that Dryden heightened and improved whatever was most weak and defective by touches of his vigorous and flowing style. He is accused of copying his Almanzor from the character of Montezuma. This play was acted with great applause, and Evelyn has mentioned that the scenes were the richest ever seen in England, or perhaps on any public stage.

After the Restoration, the theatres were limited to two in number. One was placed under the direction of Sir W. Davenant, and called the Duke's theatre. Betterton and other actors of much merit belonged to it: at the head of the other was placed Killigrew; his performers constituted the king's company, and with this latter theatre Dryden was particularly connected.

Sir R. Howard's play suggested to our Poet the subject of his next, 'The Indian Emperor,'[1] which, though not printed till October, 1667, had probably been acted early in the winter of 1664. There was not much connexion between the plot of this play, and that of his predecessor. All, it is said, that Dryden borrowed were three ghosts, the sole sad survivors, if such they can be called, of the personæ dramatis of the Indian Queen, with the exception of Montezuma. This play was

[1] To the second edition of the Indian Emperor, in 1668, was prefixed Dryden's Defence of an Essay on Dramatic Poetry. It was directed against the remarks which Sir R. Howard prefixed to his Duke of Lerna. Scott says it is worthy of preservation, as it would be difficult to point out deeper contempt and irony couched under language so temperate, cold, and outwardly respectful.

dedicated to his earliest patroness, Anne, Duchess of Monmouth; its own merits, assisted by her influence, ensured its success, and placed Dryden without a rival on the throne of dramatic fame.

Sir W. Scott has remarked 'the charm of the poetry and the ingenuity of the dialogue;' but the praise cannot be extended to any skilfulness of design, or variety of character. The Indians and Spaniards are all indiscriminately cast in the same heroic model.[1] A succession of scenes carries on the plot without unfolding it, and the

[1] Sir W. Scott justly says, that he has little doubt but that the heroic tragedies were the legitimate offspring of the French romances of Scuderi and Calprenede. The absolute dominion of Louis XIV. extended over the field of poetry and literature, as well as that of arms; nothing of passion, of emotion, of nature was allowed to be exhibited, lest it should break through the feelings of the audience, and impair the dignity of the monarch, whose system it was that *he* was the sole and single object of attraction. Every thing was to be formed on an ideal and gigantic scale, every sentiment was to be lofty and striking; the valour of the hero resistless, and the beauty of the heroine unrivalled. Thus Louis lived, and ruled a world of his own creation. This our stage adopted, and Charles approved. See some sensible observations on this subject by a clever entertaining writer, Mons. De Mayer, in the Preface to his Geneviève de Cornouailles, 1764, p. xvii. xxi. 'Si leurs personnages étoient des giants, c'est que Louis XIV. avoit imprimé un grand caractère à son siècle. Louis XIV. que Frederic a nommé le grand magicien, parceque il a pétri les tetes de ses sujets, n'aimoit que ce qui portoit l'emprunte de la grandeur, &c. —Les héros Grecs et Romains avoient les deux queues, l'écharpe et les grands canons. Orondate et Palamède naissoient, mouroient à Versailles, et se promenoient sur leurs destriers de St. Germains à Marly. Ce ridicule disparut sur la fin du règne de Louis XIV. &c.' In Charles the Second's reign the 'Maid's Tragedy' was prohibited, because it turns on the seduction of Evadne by a licentious king. See Cibber's Apology, p. 199. Waller wrote a fifth act, with a different and less displeasing termination.

voluntary death of many of the characters terminates without interest, what the ingenuity of the poet should have conducted to a more skilful issue. Love misplaced, and affections entangled in an unfortunate choice, provide an intricacy of situation that gives room for the invention of the poet; but no attempt is made to move our affections, which the subject would so easily admit, nor is advantage taken of the striking contrast which the different characters and countries would so easily have afforded. The metaphysical reasoning between the priest and Montezuma, while the latter was on the rack, shows how on Dryden's system, ingenuity of thought and well expressed argument was to compensate for the violation of all probability, and to excuse an infringement even on the laws of nature.[1]

In Shakespeare and in the tragedies of the elder dramatists, the difficulties arise from the progress of unrestrained passions, and the indulgence of criminal desires, involving the possessors in the fatal consequences of guilt, and burying them under the ruins of the unhallowed structure which they reared. Thus Othello perishes through jealousy, Macbeth by ambition, Richard by perfidy

[1] Some passages are extravagantly absurd, as

'As if our old world modestly withdrew,
And here in private had brought forth a new.'

And

'I kill'd a double man; the one half lay
Upon the ground, the other ran away.'

The former couplet is quoted in Timon, a Satire, in the Duke of Buckingham's Works, p. 164.

——— 'who but he durst presume
To make th' old world a new withdrawing room,
When of another world she's brought to bed,
What a brave midwife is a laureat's head.'

and cruelty, and Anthony the indolent, the voluptuous, and the brave, was dishonoured and dethroned by her, whose smile could melt the sternest bosoms into love, and at whose feet of beauty the rival sceptres of the earth were laid.

In Dryden, such is the difference in the structure of his dramas, the characters are, from the outset, surrounded with elaborate contrivances of perplexity. Affections are dissembled, perverted, or misplaced; the calls of duty and the feelings of desire are placed in opposition to each other; the difficulties do not grow out of the progress of the plot, or arise from the natural developement of individual character and the conflict or combinations of the varied passions and affections, but are gratuitously formed: and, at length, when ingenuity has been exhausted, and the arts of evasion baffled by the stubbornness of the materials, a conclusion is obtained by an unnatural and rapid removal of part of the characters, or by an unexpected and unaccountable alteration of their sentiments.

In consequence of the plague, which broke out with such alarming violence this year, and the terrific conflagration on the following, which laid the most populous and wealthy part of London in ashes, no plays were allowed to be exhibited. The prohibition extended from May 1665 to Christmas 1666. During this interval Dryden is supposed, with circumstances, says Johnson, according to the satire imputed to Lord Somers, not honourable to either party, to have married the Lady Elizabeth Howard,[1] and to have resided

[1] She is called the Lady *Elizabeth*. See Wilson's Life of Congreve *passim*, and Malone's Life of Dryden, p. 395. I am not at all anxious to promote quarrels between man and

in the house of his father-in-law, the Earl of Berkshire, at Charlton in Wiltshire. His leisure was amused in writing his Essay on Dramatic Poetry, which he dedicated to Lord Buckhurst, and published in the year 1667.

Dryden's marriage either interrupted, or terminated some intrigues into which his connexion with the stage, his youth and attractive appearance perhaps contributed to draw him, and which the gallantry of the age permitted without a frown. An amour with a beautiful actress, Madam

wife; or to disturb the virtuous repose of the Lady Elizabeth; but I must say, that I have stumbled on a very *awkward letter* from her, unnoticed by her biographers, and which, considering the noted gallantry of the person to whom it was addressed, wants, my dear Lady Elzy, some little explanation on your part.

'MY LORD, 1658.

'I received yours, though not without great trouble, but am not guilty of any thing you lay to my charge, nor will I ever alter from the expressions I formerly made. Therefore I hope you will not be so unjust as to believe all that the world says of me, but rather credit my protestation of never having named you to my friends, *being allways carefull of that for my own sake as well as yours*; and therefore let it not be in the power of any, nor of your own *inclinations* to make me less.

Your very humble Servant.

P. S. If you will meet me in the Old Exchange, about six o'clock, I will justify myselfe.'

The above is a letter from the Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter to the Earl of Berkshire, to Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield. See his Letters, p. 95; at p. 115 of the same work there is a letter without the address from Lord Chesterfield, which the editor thinks was to the same virtuous Lady Elizabeth: but I doubt the correctness of this conjecture, the most open and severe attack on her is in the State Poems:

'At all religious to the last from first,
Thou still hast rail'd, and then espoused the worst,
In this thy wisdom such as 'twas before,
T' abuse all woman kind—then wed a whore.'

Reeve, ended by the lady retiring from the stage to the seclusion of a cloister. There is an allusion too, I am afraid, to something like an intrigue[1] in another quarter: for the authors of the Rehearsal would let no weaknesses of our poet escape. The blessings of fame and greatness must be attended with their shadows and inconveniences; thus we are made acquainted with the disfigured person of Davenant, the libelled reputation of Dryden, and the pictured shape of Pope. Our poet, however, received no lasting injury from the imputation of weaknesses in which most shared; and the reputation of conquests which perhaps all envied. His latest biographer says of him at this time, 'that his manners were amiable, his reputation high, and his moral character unexceptionable.'

The alliance between a dependent poet, and the daughter of an earl was too unequal, to hold out much reasonable prospect of happiness,[2] after the first bloom of affection and desire had passed

[1] In some verses from Melbourne, addressed to Tonson in in 1690, on the publication of Amphytryo, he says, apostrophizing Dryden,

'Hang't—give the fop ungrateful world its will.
He (Shadwell) wears the laurel—thou deservedst it still.
Still smooth as when adorn'd with youthful pride,
For thy dear sake the blushing virgins died.
When the kind gods of wit and love combin'd,
And with large gifts thy yielding soul refin'd.'

In the key to the Rehearsal, Bays says, 'I writ that part only for her, you know she is my mistress.'—Note. The part of Amaryllis was acted by Mrs. *Ann Reeve, who at that time was kept by Mr. Bayes* An anonymous writer mentions his 'having eat tarts with *Dryden and Madam Reeve* in the Mulberry Garden.' See Gent. Mag. 1745, p. 99.

[2] I dont quite understand the allusion in the pamphlet, the reason of Mr. Bayes changing his religion, Second Part, 1690, p. 11. 'You poets ought to be excused for being witty now and then upon those who are got into the *oval* of

away. The lady was violent and capricious in temper, and weak in understanding, she brought but little fortune to compensate for her deficiencies in the qualities expected in a wife. Dislike was aggravated by poverty. She did not share in the general admiration of her husband's genius, nor lighten the toils by which it was supported. She seems to have possessed neither sweetness of disposition, generosity of mind, nor attraction of person. A man of genius, of all others, can hope for happiness only when united to a woman of sense. What can be expected from narrowness of understanding, prejudice of views, and sullenness of temper, but conflicts, alienation, and misery? Dryden never lost an opportunity of venting such bitter sarcasms against the matrimonial state, as too plainly bore evidence to his domestic misery. Indeed he never wanted a subject for satire, when marriage was to be derided, or the clergy[1] ridiculed.

The great object of Dryden's essay, mentioned above, was 'to vindicate the honour of the English poets from the censure of those who unjustly preferred the French before them,'—the admiration of Jonson's talents among Dryden's contemporaries had eclipsed, or lowered disadvan-

matrimony: for either you are plagued with an odd sort of *Latitudinarian* creatures at home, (which they say is your own misfortune, Mr. Bayes, as well as Mr. Shadwell's), and then you have all the reason in the world to vent your indignation upon that settlement called a wife, or else you are humbly content to pick a little natural philosophy out of some Fleet-street stroller,' &c.

[1] See Warton's Hist. Engl. Poetry, i. p. 358, where his alteration of Chaucer's images is noticed to gratify his spleen against the church. I possess a poem in quarto, called 'Whip for the Fool's Back, who styles Honourable Marriage a Cursed Confinement, in his profane Poem of Absalom and Achitophel.'

tageously the greater genius of Shakespeare. Dryden felt the error of the decision, and he developed the merits, and exhibited the excellences of Shakespeare's genius in so masterly a manner as to call forth the highest encomiums from Dr. Johnson, at the time he was directing his attention to the same subject. It will not be easy to find (he says) in all the opulence of our language a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakespeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastic criticism; exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise lavished by Longinus, on the attestation of the heroes of Marathon, by Demosthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character, so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or referred, nor can the editors and admirers of Shakespeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased the epitome of excellence; of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower value, though of greater bulk.

The essay is written in the form of a dialogue, the persons of the speakers are concealed under fictitious names, but it has been ascertained that through the disguise assumed, the real characters of Lord Buckhurst, Sir C. Sidly, Sir Robert Howard, and Dryden himself appear. The subject of the dialogue is first, the improved system of versification, a comparison of the ancient and

classic models with the more irregular system of the French and English drama; the most interesting parts of the whole is that in which the respective merits of Shakespeare and Jonson are examined. It ends with a discussion on the advantages of rhyme in dramatic composition, in which Dryden takes the affirmative part, against the opinions of Sir Robert Howard. The manner in which this last argument is handled occasioned a discussion between Dryden and his brother-in-law.[1] Sir Robert answered him in the preface to the Duke of Lærna; Dryden retorted in the defence of dramatic poetry, which he prefixed to the second edition of the Indian Emperor. That sensible men and brothers should be at enmity with each other for years, on a disputed point of criticism, shows that the imputation of irritability thrown out against the poetic tribe was not asserted without reason; many years after when the subject was forgotten, and so complete a reconciliation had taken place, that Dryden borrowed money from his old enemy, the defence was cancelled, and an original edition of it is said now to be extremely rare.

In 1667, the Annus Mirabilis was published, and the Maiden Queen was acted in the winter of 1666. Charles was not only the patron of

[1] The whole dispute arranges itself thus:

1. Dryden in dedication to Lord Orrery, defended dramatic rhyme.
2. Sir R. Howard in Pref. to his plays, censured the opinion.
3. Dryden in Dial. on Dram. Poetry vindicated himself.
4. Sir R. Howard in the Pref. to the Duke of Lerna observed.
5. Dryden in Pref. to Ind. emperor replied.

this play, but even suggested the plot, and rescued it from the severity of its enemies.

With regard to the 'Annus[1] Mirabilis,' Scott agrees with Dr. Aikin in confessing the disadvantages of the four line stanza[2] in which this poem is written, from the necessity of comprising the thought within the limits of the stanza. I hardly acknowledge the force of this objection, for it would apply to the versification of Pope which seldom runs beyond the narrow boundary of the couplet; nor do I see why the Poet might not if he pleased advance on a bolder wing, and extend without impediment the sense beyond the limits of the quatrain: if I rightly recollect, it is in this manner, that Mr. Roscoe has translated the Greek poem of Musurus, and Gray printed his Elegy in continuous stanzas. The use of the stanza itself no doubt Dryden adopted from Davenant, who himself probably derived it from Sir John Davis's Immortality of the Soul—for its introduction into our poetry we are indebted, I believe, to Surrey.

Scott says that Dryden seldom suffers his poem to languish, every stanza presents some strong thought or vivid description, but that the structure of the verse has laid him under the odd and unpleasing necessity of filling up his stanza, by coupling a simile, or a moral expressed in the two last lines along with the fact which had been expressed in the first. The plan of this poem is

[1] The title of Annus Mirabilis, did not originate with Dryden, a prose tract, so entitled, being published in 1662, see Malone's Pr. works of Dryden, vol. iii. p. 250.

[2] Rymer, in his preface to Rapin's Reflections on Aristotle's poetry, had found fault with the quatrain; and Davenant defended it in his pref. to Gondibert. The Earl of Sterline, had used it in his four Monarchic Tragedies.

very inartificial, and the unison of two distinct events, the naval fight and the fire of London, is unskilfully adopted Its defects resemble those of the former. There are lofty allusions connected with mean and minute descriptions more adapted to a gazette than a poem. The sense alternately swells into the bombastic, or descends to the low, and wanders into false allusions, and unnatural conceits. There is an exaggeration in the colouring, and an extravagance in the language, a want of keeping or harmony of style and imagery—elegant similes, and noble sentiments being united to the low and technical language of the ledger. After an allusion to the bees drawn from the Æneid very poetically expressed, the following stanza occurs.

CXLIX.

Our careful monarch stands in person by,
His new cast cannons' fineness to explore;
The strength of *big-corn'd* powder loves to try,
And ball and cartridge sorts for every bore.

and

CXLVIII.

Some the gall'd ropes with dawby marline bind,
Or searcloth masts with strong tarpawling coats;
To try new shrouds, one mounts into the wind,
And one below their ease or stiffness notes.[1]

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[1] That monstrous verse, says Scott, in which the extinction of the fire is described, cannot be too often quoted, both to expose the meanness of the image and the confusion of the metaphor. The flames of London are first, a tallow-candle, secondly, hawks, which, while pouncing on their quarry, are hooded with an extinguisher.

A hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipt above;
Of it a broad extinguisher he makes,
And hoods the flames, that to their quarry drove.

The Maiden Queen, the play which I before mentioned to have been acted in 1666, is said, by Langbaine, to be founded on some adventures in the grand Cyrus, and Ibrahim, the illustrious bashaw; indeed Dryden admits that the foundation of his plot was taken from the former. The character of the queen includes all that is interesting or excellent in the plot; the struggles of unrequited passion, and the final triumph of honor and duty are finely painted, while the catastrophe is so skilfully delayed, that our interest in the decision is maintained till the last. The character of Philocles is impaired by the vacillations of his affection, in the latter scenes; but the indecision of his judgment, and his struggle between virtue and love lead to one of those situations of difficulty which, as I have previously observed, formed the delight of the artificial drama. Lysistratus is drawn without any bold or prominent features that can enchain attention; a separate vein of comic[1] dialogue, belonging to an underplot, runs through the play, which the author in the last scene has attempted to unite with the former, by making Celadon assist Philocles; but there is no real unity in the fable. It was necessary, I suppose, to enliven the grave and pathetic part of the

[1] 'The comic part of the play contains much of what was thought wit, in the reign of Charles, for marriage is railed against, and a male and female rake join in extolling the pleasures of a single life, even while the usage of the theatre compels them to put on the matrimonial chain. It is surprising that no venturous author, in that gay age, concluded by making such a couple happy in their own way. The novelty of such a catastrophe would have insured its success, and unlike the termination of the lives of Celadon and Florimel, it would have been strictly in character.' See Scott's Dryden, vol. ii. p. 381.

plot with descriptions of a gay airy libertine and a clever self-confident girl, under the characters of a courtier and maid of honor. The ignorance of Philocles of the queen's attachment is perhaps out of nature; but it must be viewed with regard to the artificial system on which these plays are founded. Dryden has observed that the good taste of Charles discovered a blemish in the last scene, which, indeed, arose, from what I observed before, an attempt, too late, to bring the two actions together, when they had previously no links of connexion. Dryden, I believe, was well acquainted with the Spanish drama, and he borrowed from it its unnatural pomp of language, its unpleasing intricacy of incident, and the inartificial and improbable extrication of the story.

Confident in the resources of his genius, and having successfully tried his dramatic powers, Dryden now entered into an agreement with the King's Theatre,[1] to supply it with three plays in a year, for one share and a quarter out of twelve shares and three quarters, into which the theatrical stock was divided, and which produced him better than three or four hundred a year, the total profits of the theatre being about four thousand pounds per annum.

An author, who could enter into such an engagement, must, undoubtedly, have great reliance on the fertility of his invention[2] and the copious-

[1] The writers for the Duke's House were, Etheredge, Lord Orrery, Otway, Shadwell, Ravenscroft, Crowne, Settle, Behn, Tate; for the King's, Dryden, Sir Robert Howard, Wycherley, Durfey, James Howard, Lacy, Duffet, and Lee, to the year 1678. Edward Howard, Sidley, and Bankes, gave their plays sometimes to one theatre, sometimes to another.

[2] Jacob says, 'I think, the single consideration of Mr.

ness of his resources; but constant practice quickens the power of the intellect, awakens the slumbering associations of the fancy, gives to the taste and judgment an instantaneous selection, and to the hand a surprising facility of execution. Dryden had thought much on the subjects of the drama, had treasured up materials, at least in his imagination, if not assorted them in books. Shakespeare is supposed to have written two plays in each year, for several years, and in the compass of ten years the copious and vigorous invention of Fletcher enriched the theatre with more than thirty dramas.

On the death of Sir W. Davenant, in 1668, the poetical laurel which he had worn for thirty years, and which had descended to him at the death of Jonson, was now given to our author, after an interval of two years. The office of historiographer-royal was attached to it, which had become vacant by Howell's death: the salary was two hundred a year; the butt of Canary was not withheld, and the patent bore retrospect to the time when the office was vacated. The grant was honourably and elegantly bestowed. [1] 'To John Dryden, Master of Arts, in consideration of his many acceptable services theretofore done to his majesty, and from an observation of his learn-

Dryden having produced *six* dramatic performances in one year is sufficient to atone for inconsiderable thefts and trivial irregularities.' Lives, p. 82. But this is a mistake, see Reed's note, in Johnson's Life of Dryden, p. 348. Langbaine's authority led Johnson into the same error. Dryden did not produce more than half the plays for which he contracted; see the Memorial to the Lord Chamberlain, by Killigrew, Hart, &c. Malone's Life, p. 73.

[1] See Malone's Life of Dryden, p. 88. Pat. 22. Car. ii. p. 6. n. 6.

ing and eminent abilities, and his great skill, and elegant style both in verse and prose.'

Between the reopening of the theatres, in the beginning of 1667, and the middle of 1670, Dryden produced five original plays, and two in which he was assisted.

The Maiden Queen, which I have already noticed, was without doubt acted in 1666, and entered in the Stationers' register in 1667.

The Tempest was acted in 1667, as appears from the epilogue, though not printed till 1669.

Sir W. Scott has justly expressed his sense of the injury which the Tempest has received in passing from the pure, the beautiful, and imaginative creations of Shakespeare to the gross and tasteless alterations of Dryden and Davenant:[1] so has the delicacy of Raphael's Farnesian gallery, and the bloom of Psyche's beauty vanished beneath the coarser varnish of C. Marat. How foolish and ill placed is the duel between Ferdinand and Hippolyto! how unseasonable and out of character the quarrel between the two sisters! how low and coarse the allusion in the speech of Prospero to Dorinda,[2] and how puerile the conceit in the dialogue between Hippolyto and Dorinda![3]

[1] Scott supposes that Dryden had probably little more share in the alteration of this play than the care of adapting it to the stage. The prologue, he says, is one of the most masterly tributes ever paid at the shrine of Shakespeare.

[2] 'Prosp. You must not trust them, child. No woman can come near them, but she feels a pain full nine months,' &c.

[3] 'Dor. What is the soul? Hip. A small blue thing that runs about within us. Dor. Then have I seen it in a frosty morning, run smoaking from my mouth,' &c. Davenant died before the publication of this piece, and his memory is celebrated in the preface.

Not one additional beauty has been inserted, not one felicitous hint improved; but the profound skill and knowledge of nature, for which the original has been justly praised, has been lost sight of by the improvers, who have stripped the spiritual creation of Shakespeare of its sky-tinctured robes, and stifled the wild harmony of its notes, in order that they might deck it in the artificial finery, and bestow on it the conventional manners of their grosser times, and their degraded theatre.

Sir Martin Marall was originally a translation from the French, by the Duke of Newcastle; it was presented to Dryden, and by him adapted to the stage. None of our author's pieces was more successful; for it was acted thirty times at the theatre at Lincoln's Inn, and four times at court, in the course of two years; and when the new theatre was opened in Dorset Gardens, in 1671, the same comedy drew considerable audiences for three nights: Nokes's acting in Marall was a source of great attraction. This play is imitated from the French of Molière's L'Etourdi, which itself is an imitation of the Inavvertito of Beltrami; it was published in Dryden's name in 1667,[1] and all that is diverting and clever in it belongs, it is supposed, rather to the poet than the peer. The success of the play would much depend, I think, on the cleverness of the actors, and the adaptation of their talents to the parts assigned them. Its defects seem to consist in

[1] Scott says, it was performed by the Duke of York's servants, probably at the desire of the Duke of Newcastle, as Dryden was engaged to write for the other house. It seems to have been acted in 1667, and was published, but without the author's name, in 1668.

the overcharged character of Sir Martin, which probably was so strongly coloured for the purpose of displaying Nokes's peculiar vein of drollery. Molière's character of Lelie is more thoughtless than foolish, more true to nature, and finished with a delicate and finer hand; the stupidity in Dryden's comedy has been exaggerated, and the humour of the play rendered more broad and coarse. The consequence of making Sir Martin despicable for his conceit and stupidity prevented Mrs. Millicent's marrying him without shocking probability, yet her marriage with Warner is very inconsistent and unsatisfactory. This the greater skill and judgment of Molière has avoided. The character of the familiar, intriguing valet, unknown to English customs, proves its foreign origin. L'Amant Indiscrêt of Quinault has been used for that portion of the plot, which occasioned its being called the 'Feigned Innocence,' and which of course is not part of Molière's play. If the indecency could be expunged, an agreeable farce might now be formed from the materials, nor would a successor to Nokes's humour be sought in vain.

The Mock Astrologer was registered in November, 1668. This play is founded on the Feint Astrologue of the younger Corneille, which he imitated from the Astrologo Fingido of Calderon. The quarrelling scene between Wildblood and Jacintha is copied from the scene in the Depit Amoreux of Molière![1] Sir W. Scott says, that the play is more lively than most of Dryden's co-

[1] Evelyn mentions this 'play' a foolish plot, and very profane; it affected one to see how much the stage was degenerated and polluted by these licentious times. Memoirs, 19th June, 1668.

medies; Wildblood and Jacinth are far more pleasant than their prototypes, Celadon and Florimel, and the Spanish bustle of the plot is well calculated to fix the attention. The catastrophe, however, is too forcibly induced, and the improbabilities in the last scene are such as to require all the indulgence and good humour of the audience. To this play a very interesting preface[1] on the merits of the older dramatists is attached: and the remarks on their respective excellencies are made with knowledge and judgment.

The next play which the readiness and vigour of his genius threw out, was Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr, it was written in seven weeks, and the entry was made in the stationers' books, July 1669.[2]

This has been with justice considered as one of Dryden's characteristic plays, exhibiting the chief features of the heroic system. The personages of the drama are placed in trying perplexities of situation, and amid extraordinary combinations of events; while the movement of the passions, and the progressive action of the story are superseded by declamation, or entangled in

[1] In this preface Dryden has defended himself against the charge of plagiarism brought against him. On this point he quotes the words of Charles II., who had only desired, that they, who accused Dryden of theft, would steal him such plays as Dryden's. Langbaine, it is well known, is very severe on this head, against our poet, but his bitterest accusations only come to this, that like all his predecessors he took his plots from Novels, Romances, Chronicles, Histories, as he could best find them, and that he was occasionally indebted to the foreign stage.

[2] Malone has fixed the first acting of this play to the end of 1668, or beginning of 1669. It was printed in 1670, and a revised edition came forth in 1672.

argument. Sentiments are expressed in language bombastic and extravagant;[1]

Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba.

yet the versification is melodious, the language poetical, the thoughts ingenious, and flashes of purer and nobler feeling occasionally appear; the tender description, it has been remarked, given by Felicia of her attachment to her children in infancy, is exquisitely beautiful.

In the autumn of 1669, and the spring of the next, Dryden produced the two parts of the Conquest of Granada,[2] though they were not published till 1672. The play was received with unbounded applause, and raised the poet it is said to a higher point in public esteem, than he reached thirty years after by his translation of Virgil and his fables; in fact the system itself was a favourite with the public, and he was acknowledged as its chief. With regard to the structure of this play,

[1] Maximin, in his dying moments says,

Bring me Porphyrius and my Empress dead,
I would brave heaven, in my each hand a head.

Again,

Look to it, Gods! for you the aggressors are,
Keep you your rain and sunshine in your skies,
And I'll keep back my flame and sacrifice.
Your trade of heaven will soon be at a stand,
And all your goods lie dead upon your hand.

The dialogue of the spirits is ridiculed in the Rehearsal.

[2] On a couplet in this play,

For as old Selim was not moved by thee,
Neither will I by Selim's daughter be.

the Duke of Buckingham presents the following lines, Poems, ii. p. 220:

A py, a pudding, a pudding, a py,
A py for me and a pudding for thee;
A pudding for me and a py for thee,
And a pudding py for thee and me.

I shall observe, that the changes of fortune are too rapid and indecisive to be of interest. That the character and matchless prowess of Almanzor,[1] is so soon ascertained, that we feel assured that victory will pass from side to side with a constancy, which could only be commanded by an imaginary and invincible hero. The character of Boabdelin is contemptible, that of Lyndaraxa odious. The vacillations of Almanzor, between his ambition and his love, are almost ludicrous; while his extravagance of sentiment,[2] and his prodigious egotism place him at the head of all the heroes of romance. In this heroic kind of drama, the characters pass before us like moving pictures; we no more sympathize with them, than with the allegorical figures of Rubens. Their misfortunes draw no pity, their virtues claim no admiration, their feelings are often scarcely intel-

[1] The character of Almanzor is the original of Drawcansir in the Rehearsal, into whose mouth parodies of Dryden's most extravagant flights have been put. Shaftesbury attempts to trace the applause bestowed on this play to what he calls the correspondence and relation between our royal theatre and popular circus, or bear garden. Misc. Reflections, M. 3.

[2] As act iii. sc. 1.

Alm. Thou shalt not *wish* her thine. Thou shalt not dare
To be so impudent as to despair.

Hamet. Your slighting Zulena, this very hour,
Will take ten thousand subjects from your power.

Alm. What are ten thousand subjects such as they;
If I am scorn'd—*I'll take myself away.*

In act v. sc. 2.

Alm. Thou darest not marry her whilst I'm in sight,
With a bent brow thy priest and thee I'll fright.
And in that scene,
Which all thy hopes and wishes should content,
The thought of me shall MAKE THEE IMPOTENT.

ligible to us; they move, and think, and act in a world of their own. Love, with them, is exalted to adoration; argument is sharpened into logic; passion becomes insanity; and valour is placed above the caprice of fortune, or the possibility of defeat. Macbeth, and Othello, and Lear, meet us with passions that we recognise in the mirror of life, with reflections of the forms of history, and the creations of nature; their tears are drawn from the same fountain as our own, their smiles come from feelings familiar to us, the wildness of their passion, and the majesty of their sorrow is all ours; but the character of Almanzor[1] is altogether an artificial creation; he is a pasteboard hero of the opera stage; a being exorbitating or flying out from the common sphere of humanity, soaring in a region of his own, and never seen beyond the circle of romance. When such a character as this is introduced on the stage, one cannot help reflecting how small a scope is given to fiction in *dramatic* poetry; because the characters are measured to us, and defined by visible representation; not shaped from ideal models in our own mind, nor elevated by our imaginations in proportion to the magnitude of their actions. In such characters, as Achilles and Alexander, no power of the poet or the actor could keep pace with the demands of the spectator's

[1] Sir Walter Scott's observations on this play may be read with advantage, his critical opinions, and his acute and excellent observations are accompanied in his review of the different works of Dryden, with the utmost fairness and generosity, nor does he ever lose an opportunity to praise, where praise can be bestowed with propriety, vol. iv. p. 6, &c. In his multifarious criticisms, and acute observations in his edition of Dryden, he has been but once, and to one writer, unjust, Why was that one, Samuel Johnson?

imagination, or hope to ascend to the level of our habitual associations. A learned and ingenious writer has expressed the impression which the sight of Achilles on the French stage made on him; a more farcical or ludicrous figure could scarcely present itself to the mind, than a pert, smart, dapper Frenchman, well rouged, curled, and powdered, with the gait of a dancing master, and the accent of a milliner, attempting to personate that tremendous warrior, the nodding of whose crest dismayed armies, and the sound of whose voice made even the war-horse tremble.[1]

Dryden's great success[2] and growing reputation now called out the latent jealousy of his rivals into an open attack upon his fame; but Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, certainly took a higher ground, when he brought out his celebrated farce of the Rehearsal, in order to correct the public taste by holding up the rhyming tragedies to ridicule. This, however, was a task to which Buckingham's unassisted talents[3] were not equal; he therefore called in Butler, a keen and willing ad-

[1] See P. Knight on Taste, p. 306.

[2] Scott numbers at this time among Dryden's friends, independently of Charles, the Duke of Ormond, Thomas Lord Clifford, Duke of Newcastle, Lord Buckhurst, Sir C. Sedley, Earl of Rochester, in short all the great and gay who wished to maintain some character for literary taste; he enjoyed the affection and esteem of Cowley, Waller, Denham, Davenant (as subtle as Cowley, and more harmonious than Denham, who with a happier model would probably have excelled both), of all the men of genius at this period, whose immortality our age has admitted, *Butler* alone seems to have been the adversary of our author's reputation. Life, p. 113. 115.

[3] Of this want of talent, says Scott, the reader may find sufficient proof in the extracts from his Grace's reflections upon Absalom and Achitophel, vol. ix. p. 273.

versary, Spratt, M. Clifford,[1] and others of lower fame as contributors to his work. Johnson observes, that Waller is supposed to have added his assistance to that of Cowley, in the original draught of the Rehearsal. No less a period, it is said, than ten years were employed by them in collecting their stores of ridicule, and pointing their shafts of wit.

[2] 'With transcribing of these, and translating those,
With transmuting of rhyme, and transversing prose,
He hath dress'd up his farce with other men's clothes.'

The original hero was Davenant, satirised under the name of Bilboa; it is said that at one time he was changed for Sir Robert Howard: but although Dryden's greater reputation and genius placed him at length on the pedestal designed for others;[3] the change of the hero marred the

[1] Leigh and Clifford, and other scribblers of less note, wrote notes and remarks on Dryden's Plays and Poems. Buckingham had early distinguished himself as an opponent of the rhyming plays, and had an active share in damning the 'United Kingdoms' of the Hon. Ed. Howard.

[2] State Poems, vol. ii. p. 216.

'I come to his farce, which must needs well be done,
For Troy was no longer before it was won.
Since 'tis more than ten years since the war was begun.'

[3] As the brown-paper patch on the nose, introduced in ridicule of poor Davenant's misfortune, with a blackeyed wench at Westminster, was retained, when the character was transferred to Dryden; Scott thinks that the Poet of the Rehearsal may be considered, in some degree, as a Knight of the shire, representing all the authors of the day, and uniting in his person their several absurd peculiarities. The first sketch of the Rehearsal was written in 1664, but the representation was prevented by the theatres being shut upon the plague and the fire of London; and as Davenant and Dryden were the managers of the two theatres, perhaps there was a difficulty in bringing it forward, till Davenant's death. Scott's Life, p. 137.

consistency of the satire, as it afterwards did that of the Dunciad: for the authors were unwilling to lose the strokes more successfully levelled against Davenant, while the poignancy of the satire was lost by diffusion, or rendered harmless by misapplication to its object. This farce was performed on the 7th of December, 1671, and published in the following year. It owed its success as much to the clever mimickry of the actors as to the author's wit. Dryden's dress, manner, and usual expressions, were all copied; and Lacy, the original Bayes, was instructed to speak after the manner[1] of Dryden's recitation. The play met with a stormy reception at first. Lord Orrery, Sir R. Howard, and all the noble authors of heroic sentiments and sounding lines, were furious in their opposition; but the appositeness of its satire, the humour of its burlesque, and the wit of its parody prevailed; and when once received, the success of the Rehearsal was un-

[1] It is incredible how much pains Buckingham took with one of the actors to teach him to speak some passages in Bayes's parts in the Rehearsal right. The vulgar notion of that play being hissed off the first night, is a mistake. Spence's Anecdotes, ed. Mal. p. 102. Bayes, when he is to write, is blooded and purged. This, as Lamotte relates himself to have heard, was the real custom of Dryden. Reh. act ii. sc. 1. Bays, 'Why I'll tell you what I do. If I am to write familiar things, as Sonnets to Armida, and the like, I use *stewed prunes* only: but when I have a grand design in hand, I ever take physic and let blood; for when you would have pure swiftness of thought, and fiery flights of fancy, you must have a care of the pensive part. In fine, you must purge the belly.'—Bayes is right, these things are of importance; one poet, whom I knew, never could write but in leather breeches; another amiable and well known bard, the author of the Sabbath, always when he sat down to compose, put on his spurs. These are idiosyncrasies, belonging to the sons of Apollo.

bounded. Dryden's Play of Marriage-a-la-Mode was alluded to, though not acted nor printed till the subsequent year, but it probably had been shown about, as was the custom, in manuscript. In the distress of P. Prettyman, Leonidas is alluded to, as the author of the Key to the Rehearsal points out a parallel between them.

To this attack Dryden made no reply; indeed it is difficult to repel wit but with its own keen weapons. He owned, however, the cleverness and ability displayed in it. In the dedication to Juvenal, he says, 'I answered not the Rehearsal, because I knew that the author sate to himself when he drew the picture, and was the very Bayes of his own farce: because, also, I knew that my betters were more concerned than I was in that satire; and, lastly, because Mr. Smith and Mr. Johnson, the main pillars of it, were two such languishing gentlemen in their conversation, that I could liken them to nothing but their own relations, those noble characters of men of wit and pleasure about town.' Dryden might have added, that under this appearance of indifference he veiled his resentment for a time; but that at length the character of Zimri in Absalom and Achitophel fully avenged his injured reputation, and he who had began the jest, was laughed at in his turn. These lines, as Dr. Warton observes, were intended as a payment in full for the *bitter satire* acted nine years before.

Although this clever attack did not effectually banish heroic nonsense in rhyme from the stage, it gave it a very powerful blow;[1] Dryden was not,

[1] The authors whose works were ridiculed were Sir William Barclay, Davenant, Sir William Killigrew, Sir R. Stapleton, James and Henry Howard, T. Porter, and Mrs. A. Behn.

perhaps, reluctant to turn from a situation which it was difficult for him to retain: and to avoid either giving way to the clamour of his enemies, or persisting against the opinion of the public, he judiciously directed his attention to Comedy. In 1672, he produced his Marriage-a-la-Mode, and the Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery. The former was successful; Sir W. Scott says it is a Tragi-Comedy,[1] or rather a Tragedy and Comedy, the plot and scenes of which are intermingled, for they have no natural connexion with each other. The state intrigue bears evident marks of hurry and inattention, and it is at least possible that Dryden originally intended it for the subject of a proper heroic play, but startled at the effect of Buckingham's[2] Satire, hastily added to it some comic scenes, either lying by him or composed on purpose. The higher, or tragic plot, is not only grossly inartificial and improbable, but its incidents are so perplexed and obscure, that it would have required much more action to detail them intelligibly; even the language has an abridged appearance, and favours the idea that the tragic intrigue was to have been extended into an heroic play, instead of occupying a spare corner in a comedy. But to make amends, the comic scenes are executed with spirit, and in a

[1] See Scott's Life of Dryden, p. 143; and vol. iv. p. 233, this play was first acted in 1673, in an old theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, occupied by the king's company, after that in Drury Lane had been burnt, and during its rebuilding.

[2] Is the ingenious editor of the Epistolary Curiosities of the Herbert Family (1818) aware that she has made a *slight* mistake in giving the character of Zimri to Mulgrave, Duke of Buckinghamshire, instead of Villiers, Duke of Buckingham? vol. ii. p. 203.

style resembling those in the Maiden Queen.[1] They contain much witty and fashionable raillery, and the character of Melantha[2] is pronounced by Cibber to exhibit the most complete system of female foppery that could possibly be crowded into the tortured form of a fine lady. It was admirably acted by Mrs. Montfort, afterwards Mrs. Verbruggen.

Our author was not so successful in the other piece, 'Love in a Nunnery,' which, by his own confession, was condemned. Ravenscroft, in his prologue to the Careless Lovers, alludes to the unfortunate fate of this play,

> Ah! how severe your malice was that day,
> To damn at once the poet and the play.

Scott considers that the causes of this failure are not readily to be assigned, and that it is needless to investigate the dislike of an audience who could give no reason for their capricious condemnation. Perhaps the absurd scene in which

[1] Cibber combined the comic scenes of these two plays into a Comedy called 'The Comical Lovers.'

[2] See Cibber's Apology, p. 99, from a copy of verses in the Gent. Mag. vol. xv. p. 99, the excellence of the various performers may be learnt, by whom the piece was presented.

> 'What from her lips *fantastic Montfort* caught,
> And almost mov'd the thing the poet thought.
> . . . . . .
> Or thou, or beauteous *Woffington* display
> What Dryden's self with pleasure might survey,
> E'en he before whose visionary eyes
> Melantha rob'd in ever varying dyes,
> Gay fancy's work appears, actor renown'd,
> Like Roscius with theatric laurels crown'd.
> Cibber will smile applause, and think again
> Of *Harte* and Mohun, and all the female train,
> Coxe, Marshall, DRYDEN'S REEVE, Bet Slade, and
> Charles's reign.'

the prince pretends a fit of the colic had some share in the fate of the piece.[1] To this I should add, that though in the two first acts there is much smart repartee, sparkling wit, and ingenious dialogue, yet there is no variety of incident, change of situation, or progress of action. The love of a father and a son for the same object, must also produce an unpleasing effect upon the mind.[2]

In the following year, (1673) he produced the tragedy of Amboyna, which was planned and written in a month. It is in prose and blank verse, and was composed, the author says, to inflame the nation against the Dutch, with whom we were then at war. Even the most impartial and generous of critics has pronounced this play beneath criticism, and the very worst that our poet ever wrote.

In his Essay on Dramatic Poesy,[3] and in his

[1] This was justly ridiculed in the *revised* edition of the Rehearsal, where Bayes says,—'I remember in a play of mine I set off a scene, i'gad, beyond expectation, only with a petticoat and the belly-ache.' Smith. 'Aye, but Mr. Bayes, how could you contrive the belly-ache,' &c.

[2] Dryden attacked a miserable scribbling plagiarist, called Edward Ravenscroft, in the prologue to this play, as he has less directly done in that of the Marriage à la Mode. Hence the exquisite pleasure which Ravenscroft received at its failure, as appears in the prologue to his 'Careless Lovers.' Of this gentleman's taste, Scott says, it may be held a satisfactory instance, that he deemed the tragedy of Titus Andronicus *too mild and tame*, and added some more murders, rapes, and parricides, to make it fit for representation; he says,

> Like other poets, he'll not proudly scorn
> To own, but that he winnow'd Shakespeare's corn;
> So far was he from robbing him of's treasure,
> That *he did add his own*, to make full measure.

[3] This bold epilogue gave much offence, on account of the censure which it threw on the fathers of the stage. Ro-

epilogue to the Conquest of Granada, Dryden had pointed out the faults of the elder dramatists with less gentleness and reverence than was esteemed due to their great and established reputation. He also claimed the superiority of the plays of his own age, and of the heroic drama over those of the times of Elizabeth and James. He censures the antiquated language, the defective plots, the irregular action of Shakespeare and Fletcher; and points his strongest arguments against the inelegant language and the low characters of Jonson. These he disadvantageously contrasts with the productions of a theatre revived under the auspices of a gallant monarch and a fashionable court, where the solidity of English sense is united to the sportive raillery, the lightness, the ease, and the gaiety of the French

chester, among others, severely assailed it. Scott has observed how much the character and style of Shakespeare's and Dryden's dramas were influenced by the manners of the respective ages in which they lived, and the different audiences to whom they were addressed. The poor small theatres in which Shakespeare's and Jonson's plays were represented were filled with spectators, 'who though of the middle rank were probably worse educated than our more vulgar;' but they came prepared with a tribute of tears, and laughter to bursts of passion or effusions of wit, though incapable of estimating the beauties derived from the gradual developement of a story, well maintained characters, well arranged incidents, and the minute beauties of language. Dryden, on the other hand, wrote what was to pass before the judgment of a monarch and his courtiers, professed judges of dramatic criticism, and a formidable band of town critics; art therefore was not only a requisite qualification, but the principal attribute of the dramatic poet. An exhibition of nature, in the strength of her wildest energies, as in Lear and Othello; deep emotion, or sweet and simple pathos, would have found no correspondent feeling in the bosoms of the selfish, the witty, the affected, and the critical audience, who pre-

drama. Scott thinks[1] that Dryden, perhaps from the rigour of a puritanical education, had not studied the old dramatic models in his youth, and had only begun to read them with attention when it was his object rather to depreciate than to emulate them, but the time came when he did due homage to their genius.

Those who hated Dryden's talents, and envied his success, the old critics and the rival playwrights, took this opportunity, under pretence of advocating the injured cause of the ancients, of attacking the productions of Dryden's muse; and as the style of controversy in that age was virulent and rude, they passed from a criticism on his writings to reflections on his character. 'Literary contest,' as his biographer observes, 'was embittered by personal hatred, and truth was so far from being the object of the combatants, that even victory was tasteless unless obtained by the disgrace or degradation of an opponent.'[2]

Matthew Clifford, one of the contributors to the Rehearsal, printed his Notes on Dryden's poems in four letters, together with some reflections on the Hind and Panther by T. Brown, in 1687. It is probable that for some years previously they had been circulated in clubs and literary coffee-houses by numerous transcripts. They chiefly consist of a rude clumsy banter mixed up with

ferred the ingenious, romantic, and polished. Scott questions whether the age of Charles II. would have borne the introduction of Othello and Falstaff. The editor of Corneille boasts that the French poet, with all the genius of Shakespeare, had a more *refined and gentlemanly* feeling—Ce qu'un Seigneur est à l' égard d'un homme de peuple.

[1] Scott's Life of Dryden, p. 152. [2] Ibid, p. 153.

minute and verbal criticism. Another pamphlet that appeared was 'the censure of the Rota on Mr. Dryden's Conquest of Granada' printed at Oxford 1673. This was followed by a Description of the academy of Athenian Virtuosi, with a discourse held there in vindication of Mr. Dryden's Conquest of Granada against the author of 'the censure of the Rota,' and a third called 'A Friendly Vindication of Mr. Dryden from the author of the censure of the Rota,' this was printed at Cambridge. The two former were written by Richard Leigh, of Queen's College, Oxford, afterwards a player in the Duke's company: but not the celebrated comedian of that name. The third is written in the same taste, but by a different hand. Dryden is accused, probably without truth, of exhibiting in his dramatic characters the portraits of living persons. In Charles Blount, our poet found an admirer of his genius and vindicator of his fame; and in his own address to Sedley, he notices these attacks with the contempt which they deserved. Edward Ravenscroft, who constructed a slender and temporary reputation by altering the plays of Shakespeare, and imitating those of Moliere, threw out some sneers against the heroic drama, and particularly the Conquest of Granada. Dryden retorted in a prologue to the Assignation, and an epilogue to the Marriage à la Mode, and the degrading controversy closed by some lines which his antagonist wrote on the bad success of the 'Assignation.'

In 1674, Dryden published his State of Innocence,[1] a play adapted from Milton's Paradise

[1] Langbaine remarks on the dedication of this play to the Duchess of York, 'whether the author has not been guilty

Lost, but not intended for stage exhibition. Aubrey has told us but too briefly some circumstances attending it, which have been copied into most of the biographies of the poet: and yet familiar as the anecdote is, the meeting between two of our greatest poets, the one in the calm serenity and satisfaction of declining life, the other full of youthful hopes, and high in fame, is too interesting to be altogether omitted. Dryden, it appears, waited on the blind bard, with whom it may be presumed, he was on friendly terms, and previous to entering on his task, asked his permission to put his great poem into rhyme.—'Ay, said Milton, you may *tag* my verses if you will.' Dennis says, that Dryden at that time knew not half the extent of Milton's excellence as more than twenty years after he confessed to him, and is pretty plain from his writing 'The State of Innocence;'[1] we may add that Milton also was imperfectly acquainted with Dryden's powers, and could little have anticipated the future splendor of his fame.

As Scott observes, that the *costume* of our first parents must have rendered this play unfit for the stage, it is not easy to conjecture the mo-

of the highest flattery, I leave to the reader's judgment, but I may presume to say there are some expressions in it that seem strained, and a note beyond 'Ela,' as for instance, 'your person is so admirable that it can scarce receive addition, when it shall be glorified; and your soul, which shines throughout, finds it of a substance so near her own, that she will be pleased to pass an age within it, and to be confined to such a palace.'—Dram. Poets, p. 172. This is high flown nonsense certainly, but it was addressed to the most dazzling and radiant beauty that ever sate on the British throne, and Dryden had so long been accustomed to extravagant expressions, that he was not aware of their real force.

[1] Mr Dennis's Letters moral and critical, vol. i. p. 75, 8vo. 1721.

tives which led Dryden to form the epic of Milton into a drama. At the same time it must be observed, that the stage directions are minute and particular, more so than would be at all necessary in a poem intended for perusal. I can only escape from the difficulty of this dilemma, by supposing that accuracy and propriety of dress[1] was no more required by the audience, or attended to by the players at that time than consistency of language and character was maintained by the poet; and that without shocking probability, Adam might have sate in[2] the primeval bower, formed of cut yew trees and rosemary, in a Steinkirck cravat and Chadreux peruke; while Eve conversed with the serpent (himself perhaps dressed in a herald's coat) with a hoop petticoat, a falbala, and a fan.

Of the execution of this performance, I know not what to say, but that all who can estimate the greatness of Milton's images, the simplicity, the majesty, the richness of his language, the exquisite propriety of his thoughts, the fine ideal of his characters, Dryden's distorted reflection of

[1] In a French play, 'The Mort d'Abel of Legouve,' partly taken from Gesner, which was *often acted*; Adam and Eve appeared on the stage dressed according to the most *exact* imitation of that state in which they may be supposed to have lived, when they left the bowers of Eden.

[2] Act ii. sc. 2, 'Scene Paradise.' Trees *cut out* on each side, with several fruits upon them, a fountain in the midst, at the far end, the prospect terminates in walk. Eve enters and utters the following lines among others.

> Like myself, I see nothing: from each tree,
> The feather'd kind peep down to look on me,
> And beasts with upcast eyes forsake their shade;
> And gaze, as if I were to be obey'd.
> Sure I am somewhat which they wish to be,
> And cannot, *I myself am proud of me.*

it must appear very grotesque and ridiculous; in many parts puerile and weak; in all, losing sight of the exalted strains of poetry, and the noble conception of the original. That great creation of Milton's genius, the character of Satan, the angel of sorrow is sullied or lost. All his majestic lineaments disappear,[1] the eye of pride, the lurid brow of woe, the greatness of his scorn, the conscious dignity of his demeanour, the feelings of one who had stood before the throne of light, (himself the morning star of heaven) all are destroyed; while only the impish cunning, the wicked, malignant, fiendish joy of the satyr and the demon is left. The simplicity of Eve is impaired, and even her purity and innocence stained;[2] while the behaviour of Adam to his

[1] Dr. Warton has contrasted the majestic character of Satan in Milton, with the grotesque figure drawn by Dante, with his three heads and leathern wings. This is not, he says, the figure of an archangel fallen. The Satan in the Davideis disgraces Cowley, Warton's Dryden, ii. p. 310. Tasso has followed the grosser conceptions of the elder Italian poets; I have thought that they both drew from their early painters; even M. Angelo in this respect was not in advance of his brethren, though he brought to painting the sensibilities and powers of a poet.

[2] In a pamphlet I have quoted before, 'Reason of Mr. Bayes for changing his Religion,' there is much amusing banter on the subject of Eve in Dryden's play, discoursing of flames, darts, transports, the performances of lovers, and the fatality of matrimony: for 'Adam, I made him as well acquainted with all the arguments of the supralapsarians, as a justice's clerk is with all the she traders in his master's dominions. So that when the archangel Michael came to pay him a visit at his summer-house, he presently engages him before the second course is removed in the controversie, about Freewill; professes mediums, silences objections, tells his guest that his major was open enough to let a whole shoal of Armenians in at the breaches; that his minor would not hold water, &c.'—

angel guest and his pertinacious arguments on the doctrines of liberty and necessity, which it took two angels with the assistance of old Hobbes to answer, is in strong and humiliating contrast with the exquisite truth, the delicacy and propriety of Milton's picture.[1] A great want of taste is also discovered, in uniting the ornamented and figurative diction of Milton, with his own meaner and more colloquial language, and even sometimes in making it the vehicle of political satire. One of his critics told him, that he 'had heard of anchovies dissolved in sauce, but never of angels dissolved in Hallelujahs.'

Dryden had now the leisure of two years for the composition of Aurengzebe, his last tragedy,

[1] Act iii. sc. 1. Eve says to Adam,

A doubtful trembling seized me first all o'er,
Then wishes and a warmth unknown before:
What followed was all ecstasy and trance,
Immortal pleasures round my swimming eyes did dance.
And speechless joys, in whose sweet tumults lost,
I thought my breath and my new being lost.

Upon hearing which, Lucifer says,

Why have not I, like these, a body too,
Formed for the same delights which they pursue;
(I could so variously my passions move,)
Enjoy, and blast her in the act of love.

In the same scene, Eve is supposed in a dream, to see the future temptation. It is thus described—

Angel. Behold what a change on a sudden is here,
How glorious in beauty, how bright they appear,
From spirits deformed they are deities made,
Their pinions at pleasure, the clouds can invade,
Till equal in honour they rise
With him who commands in the skies,
Then taste without fear, and be happy and wise.

Woman. Oh! now I believe! such pleasure I find,

which was exhibited in the spring of 1675. It was his last heroic tragedy. He confessed that he had grown weary of his old mistress rhyme, and he discovered at length that nature and passion were not so to be constrained.

> Passions too fierce to be in fetters bound,
> And nature flies her like enchanted ground.

The manuscript was perused by Charles, before it received the author's last hand, and (oh! courtly confession!) the most considerable event in it was modelled by his 'royal pleasure;' which is something better than his 'royal taste.'

Should this play be considered as a model of the heroic style, the character, sentiments, and language of the Queen Nourmahal will be sufficient to place it on a very low level in point of delicacy of taste, and soundness of judgment. The

> As enlightens my eyes, and enlivens my mind;
> I only repent
> I deferr'd my content.
> *Angel.* Now wiser experience has taught you to prove,
> What a folly it is,
> Out of fear to shun bliss,
> To the joy that's forbidden we eagerly move, &c.

In act v. the following speeches occur:

> *Eve.* The unhappiest of creation is a wife,
> Made lowest in the highest rank of life,
> Her fellow's slave! to know and not to choose,
> Curst with that reason she must never use.
> *Adam.* Add, that she's proud, fantastic, apt to change,
> Restless at home, and ever prone to range;
> With shows delighted, and so vain is she,
> She'll meet the devil, rather than not see.
> Our wise Creator, for his choirs divine,
> Peopled his heaven with souls all masculine, &c.

Shade of John Milton! your verses have been TAGGED indeed!

last speech of the queen is probably the most exalted specimen of absurdity, hyperbole, and extravagance that was ever conceived.[1] Could Dryden intend it as a satire on his own style, and ungratefully ridicule the antiquated beauty whom he had so long worshipped, but whose faded and too familiar charms he was going to desert? In it is his last farewell to his once admired model, the rhyming heroic tragedy, and in this speech the character was well preserved to the last.[2]

I must now for a moment divert the current of

[1] Dr. Johnson's supposition, 'that in assuming for his subject a *living prince* Dryden incurred some risk: as should Aurengzebe have learnt and resented our freedom, and that he was figuring on the boards of Drury Lane, our *Indian trade* was exposed *to the consequences of his displeasure*,' fortunately was not verified. Sir W. Scott considers that the last descendant of Timor, the Emperor of India, the Ornament of the throne, might not hear of his degradation; or if he did, whether he would have cared about it.

[2] The beauties of Aurengzebe, says Scott, will be found to consist in strains of didactic morality or solemn meditation. The passage descriptive of life has been praised by all the critics down to Dr. Johnson. There is much less of ornate structure and emphatic swell than occurs in the speeches of Almanzor and Maximian. It is amusing to see the anxiety with which Dryden justifies the hazardous experiment of ascribing to emperors and princesses the language of nature and passion. Davies, in his Dramatic Miscellanies says, that Dryden's last and most perfect rhyming tragedy was Aurengzebe. In this play, the passions are strongly depicted, the characters well discriminated, and the diction more familiar and dramatic than in any of his preceding pieces. Vol. i. p. 157. I must observe that all observations on the advantage or defects of *rhyme* are confined strictly to the English language. There is no reasoning from the Italian or the French to the English about rhyme or blank verse. One language, says Johnson, cannot communicate its rules to another.

the dramatic narrative, shortly to detail the ungrateful subject of the controversy with Settle.

Elkanah Settle had the misfortune to be raised by the intrigue of a court party and a state faction to a temporary rivalry with Dryden. Rochester hated Dryden, from the latter's intimacy with his victorious opponent, Mulgrave, and he envied the immense superiority of his talents; he therefore made use of so mean and contemptible a person as Settle, whom in his heart he must have despised, in order to distract the public opinion from Dryden's merits, and, at the least, to divide the fickle judgment of the town. In 1671, Settle's play of Cambyses, King of Persia, was acted for six nights successively; his second, The Empress of Morocco, was performed with immense applause for a month together. Prologues were written by Rochester, and even by Mulgrave, the friend of Dryden; and they were delivered by the lips of beauty, in the person of the Lady Elizabeth Howard. Settle was giddy with his unlooked-for success; and an arrogant dedication to the Earl of Norwich was levelled against our Poet. The play was decorated with engravings;[1] the price of it was advanced to two shillings; and Settle assumed the title which belonged by right to Dryden, of Servant to his Majesty.

[1] See 'The Art of Poetry.'

> 'Nay 'tis a wonder if in his dire rage
> He prints not his dull follies for the stage,
> And in the front of all his senseless plays
> Makes David Loggan crown his head with bays.'

Loggan was the engraver. Scott thinks that these lines are Dryden's. See vol. xv. p. 244. The frontispiece to the play was curious, as exhibiting the *façade* of the theatre in Dorset Gardens.

Dryden could not patiently digest this triumph of a fool; he ought to have held in his spleen, and waited for the passions of the town to cool; but his anger and provocation were great, and in conjunction with Shadwell and Crowne, he printed his remarks on the Empress of Morocco. Settle answered it, and left his antagonist covered with the dust and dirt of a degrading and injudicious controversy.[1]

No sooner had Rochester placed Settle on the pedestal of fame, than he was anxious to dethrone him; to effect this he persuaded Crowne to write the masque of Calisto, which was acted in 1675 by the ladies at court, who were most distinguished for their rank and beauty.[2] It had a run of thirty nights; was of course got up with all becoming splendour of decoration, and Dryden suffered a further mortification in having his epilogue to it refused, which was intended to have been spoken by the Lady Henrietta Wentworth; then young, and beautiful, and innocent—afterwards the adored, the unfortunate, alas! the guilty mistress

[1] See Scott's ed. vol. xv. p. 398. For an amusing extract from the fustian and nonsense of this play of Settle's, see Scott's Life of Dryden, p. 183. Dryden has drawn so nice a distinction between his plays and Settle's, when he says 'His were good sense, that looked like nonsense; Settle's nonsense, which yet looked very like sense,' that we must suppose that there was not much difference between them.

[2] Calisto, by Lady Mary, afterwards Queen.
Nyphe . . Lady Anne, afterwards Queen.
Jupiter . . Lady H. M. Wentworth.
Psicas . . Lady Mary Mordaunt.
Diana . . Mrs. Blayne.
Mercury . Mrs. Sarah Jennings, afterwards Duchess of Marlborough.
Attendant nymphs—Countess of Pembroke, Lady Catharine Herbert, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Fraser.

of the Duke of Monmouth. Crowne's reign of glory, however, was as short as that of his predecessor, and Rochester now recommended Otway to the royal protection. Don Carlos appeared in 1676; in his preface[1] he owned his obligations to Rochester, who soon after lampooned him; and he spoke disparagingly of Dryden, who really saw, and more than once confessed in what the strength of Otway's genius consisted.

In an anonymous satire, which appeared in 1678, called 'An Allusion to the tenth Satire of Horace,' Rochester again assailed Dryden's reputation. Dryden alludes to it in the Preface to his All for Love. To account for this better system of persecution, it is necessary to recollect that Mulgrave's Essay on Satire[2] was submitted to Dryden's correction. Though written in 1675, it was not made public till 1679. It was pecu-

[1] 'A certain writer that shall be nameless (but you may guess at him by what follows) being asked his opinion of this play, very gravely cocked and cried, I gad, he knew not a line in it he would be author of; but he is a fine facetious person, as my friend Sir Formal has it, and to be even with him, I know a comedy of his that has not so much as a quibble in it, which I would be author of.' Pref. to Don Carlos. Don Carlos went off with great applause, while The Orphan, a somewhat better performance, and what is yet more strange, Venice Preserved met with a very cold reception. See Armstrong's Miscellan. i. p. 137.

[2] Though prais'd and punish'd for another's rhymes,
His own deserve as much applause *sometimes*.

This egregiously impudent effusion applied by Sheffield to Dryden. Pope erased; and no doubt with due indignation. I shall here mention that the 'Art of Poetry,' by Sir William Soame, is published in Dryden's Works, on the authority of J. Tonson; and that Scott says, 'a great part of the poem bears marks of Dryden's polishing hand, and some entire passages show at once his taste in criticisms, principles, and prejudices.'

liarly severe on Rochester, accused him of cowardice, and openly denounced the profligacy of his life. Rochester thought, or pretended to think, that Dryden was the author, and he meditated a species of revenge more ferocious than the pen could give.[1] On the night of the 18th of December, 1679, Dryden was way-laid by hired ruffians and severely beaten, as he passed through Rose Street, Covent Garden, on his return from Wills's Coffee House to Gerrard Street; a reward of £50 and a promise of pardon was in vain offered in the London Gazette and other papers, for the discovery of the perpetrators; but Rochester and the Duchess of Portsmouth were universally considered as the secret promoters of the outrage. This Rose-alley ambuscade became, it appears, proverbial, under the name of 'a Dryden Salutation.'

In 1678, the tragedy of All for Love and the Comedy of Limberham were printed. With regard to the former play, Dryden said 'it was the only one which he wrote for himself, the rest were given to the people.' This play was founded on the Antony and Cleopatra of Shakespeare; but the plays of our great bard, after the restoration, were not popular. Jonson stood unrivalled

[1] In a letter of Rochester to H. Saville, 20th of Nov. 1692. 'You write me word that I am out of favour with a certain poet, whom I have admired for the disproportion of him and his attributes. He is a rarity which I cannot but be fond of, as one would be of a boy that could fiddle, or a singing owl. If he falls on me at the blunt, which is his very good weapon in wit, I will forgive him if you please, *and leave the repartee to black Will with a cudgel*.' In the country, Lord Rochester lived a blameless life, but he used to say, 'when he came to Brentford, the Devil entered into him, and never left him till he returned to the country.'

in public estimation; and, it is said, that we are mainly indebted to Dryden for bringing the public to a better and higher taste. In his preface he speaks of Shakespeare in such language of praise as could scarcely be heightened. As one who, without learning, should by the force of his own genius perform so much, that, in a manner, he left no praise for any who came after him. He speaks of the pleasure he would have had, had opportunity been convenient, of drawing a parallel between him and Fletcher, and how far they were to be imitated; and, at length, he says, 'I hope I may affirm, and without vanity, that by imitating him, I have excelled myself in this play, and particularly that I prefer the scene between Antony and Ventidius to any thing which I have written of this kind.

When Dryden had broken loose from the bondage of his artificial drama,[1] if he did not spring

[1] According to the opinion of Walter Harte, who had studied Dryden's works with great diligence, he settled his principles of versification in 1676, when he produced the play of Aurengzebe; and, according to his own account, of the short time in which he wrote Tyrannic Love, and the State of Innocence, he soon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactness. Johnson's Life.

The reign of rhyming tragedies lasted about fifteen years, from 1662 to 1676, a few heroic plays afterwards appeared, but they were not long-lived. A French critic has so acutely and sensibly expressed his sentiments on the genius of Corneille, and so much of what he has remarked on that particular writer, applies to the *system* adopted partly from him and to the peculiarities of Dryden's mind, that I shall make no apology for extracting a small portion of it, as I transcribe it from an early volume of the Correspondance Littéraire of Bar. Grimm. In much of what Grimm remarks, the name of Dryden might be substituted for that of the French poet. 'Pierre Corneille avait recu de la nature, du génie, de l'élévation, une téte grande et forte. Si avec toutes ses grandes

at once into the arms of nature and of poetry, he moved towards them. What a striking contrast does this play afford to the last! How rich in imagination, how true in feeling! how powerful in interest! the eloquence of the tongue interpreting the dialect of the heart. What variety of incidents, what contrast of character, what pathos of sentiment, what melody and luxuriance of language. If any thing were wanting to assure us of the genius of Shakespeare, we have only to contemplate what Dryden became the moment

qualités, il se fut trouvé doué du sentiment, d'un âme tendre, flexible, et mobile, c'eût été sans doute le Poëte du génie le plus rare qu'il y eût jamais eu. C'est le cœur qui rend véritablement éloquent, c'est lui qui dans les siècles cultivés comme dans les siècles barbares donne le caractère touchant qui rend les poëtes immortels. Le Cœur de Corneille fut aride, les ressources qu'il n'y trouvait pas, il fallait les chercher dans sa tête, et le raisonnement prit partout la place du sentiment. . . . . Le goût de la Littérature *Espagnole* qui avait infecté une grande partie de l'Europe, a achevé de corrompre celui de Corneille. Ce poëte, plein de chaleur et de force, établit sur la scène Françoise l'influence Espagnole, la déclamation, et la fausse emphase à côté de l'élévation, et de la grandeur. Si Corneille avec ses grands talens, avec cet art de raisonner, qu'il possédait si éminemment, se fut tourné de côté du barreau, c'eût été sans doute, le plus grand avocat qu'on eût jamais eu, mais la poësie dramatique, qui était alors à créer en France, exigeait autre chose. Ses situations sont ordinairement sublimes, la première conception de ses idées, grande et merveilleuse : mais j'oserais dire que leur exécution satisfait rarement un esprit cultivé, un homme de goût. Ses personnages manquent toujours du naturel; dans les momens les plus beaux c'est presque toujours le poëte qui est grand, et qui vous distrait de ses acteurs. Le génie de ses hommes d'état consiste à débiter des maximes de politique dont ses livres dogmatiques sont pleins, mais avec lesquelles on n'a jamais bruité aucune affaire. Ses tyrans et ses méchans ont aussi leurs sentences, et débitent naïvement des principes qui ont été souvent dans leur cœur, mais que bien loin d'avoir dans la bouche, ils ne se sont jamais bien

he forsook the conventional models of the French stage, and followed Shakespeare, though at a distance, into the sanctuary of nature. To institute a comparison between the two plays, it would be necessary to keep in mind, that the one is modelled on the other, that it has borrowed from it some of its boldest flights, its picturesque descriptions, and its touching appeals, while the judgment and taste of the later poet are displayed in the closer connexion of the plot, in the disposition of the incidents, in the greater uniformity[1] of the

avoués à eux mêmes. Ses caractères, sensibles et tendres, mettent le raisonnement, souvent fort alambique, toujours froid, à la place du sentiment qui entraine, la passion, et particulièrement l'amour, au lieu d'être un suite des dévélopemens des mouvemens les plus secrets de notre âme, sont devenus dans ses pièces un résultat de raisonnemens, et de lieux communs.

* * * * * *

Again, in another place he says ;—

Notre tragédie a un code particulier de lois, les événemens s'y passent et s'y enchaînent autrement que dans le monde moral. Les personnages agissent sur d'autres motifs que ceux qui déterminent les actions des hommes, leurs discours ne ressemblent point à ceux que l'intérêt, la passion, la vérité de la situation inspirent, tout le système de la tragédie moderne est un système de convention et de fantaisie qui n'a point de modèle dans la nature. Si un homme sensé vous racontait sérieusement qu'il s'est passé en tel lieu de l'Europe un événement important de la manière dont ils se passent dans les tragédies les mieux intriguées, cet homme vous ferait pitié avec son conte. Si un ministre, un homme d'état discutait une grande affaire dans le goût de la fameuse scène de Sertorius qu'on entend citer sans cesse comme un chef-d'œuvre de politique, vous le croiriez menacé de tomber en enfance. Si les discours d'un homme en détresse ou en proie à une passion terrible, ressemblaient le moins du monde à une tirade tragique, au lieu de vous intéresser, ils vous feraient rire. See also Scott's Life of Dryden, p. 70. 72.

[1] Shakespeare has diffused the action of his piece over Egypt, Italy, and Greece ; Dryden has concentrated and con-

whole, and in the rejection of much that was extraneous to the movement of the action. In the description of Cleopatra sailing down the Cydnus, Dryden gives us little more than a selection from Shakespeare, but that selection is made with admirable judgment. Something of the exuberant fancy, of the gorgeous and lavish magnificence of the elder poet is lost, but nothing is borrowed that is not of sterling worth.

On the whole, the conduct of the plot is better arranged in Dryden; the unities more strictly preserved, the interest more concentrated. Those parts that do not advance the action are omitted, some characters are more fully developed, but that of Antony, Scott considers to be weakened, and that of Octavia rendered less amiable. Dryden's tragedy does honor to his poetical powers, yet

fined his plot to the city of Alexandria: he has also discarded many uninteresting characters. Dryden contents himself with the concluding scene of Antony's History, instead of introducing many previous circumstances that distract the attention from the points of main interest. Thus a unity of time and place has been happily attained; but though Dryden has shown superior address in managing the story, his biographer justly says, in other respects he is inferior to his great prototype. Antony, the principal character, is incomparably grander in Shakespeare. Dryden has made love the sole ingredient, but it has not the deep and mingled passion of the dishonoured soldier and the dethroned emperor. The awful ruin of grandeur, undermined by passion, and tottering to its fall, is far more striking in Shakespeare. In the Cleopatra of Dryden there is greatly less spirit and ingenuity than in Shakespeare's. The preparation of the latter for death has a grandeur which puts to shame the same scene in Dryden's, and serves to support the interest during the whole fifth act. In the character of Ventidius, Dryden has filled up with ability the rude sketches which Shakespeare has thrown off in those of Sæva and Eros. Davies says, that even in his time, this play had gradually sunk into forgetfulness.

in the original play, every page is filled with some touches of invention, some poetical conceptions, some master strokes of wisdom or of wit, that leave all comparison far behind, and prove the inexhaustible and unapproachable excellence of Shakespeare's genius. I cannot help remarking that the character of Cleopatra would be one of the most difficult in all Shakespeare as a trial to the talents of an actress; such is the variety of passion, the change of feeling, the scornful, the festive, the ironical, the impetuous; in the gaiety of its humour and in the depth of its pathos, it would require a flexibility, as well as force of talent, such as perhaps were seldom united.

The subject of this play is one so brilliant and captivating, as to have called forth the emulation of other and considerable poets; as Sir Walter Scott says that he never met with the dramas on this subject by May and by Daniel, I shall be excused in saying, that Daniel's is dedicated, in some elegant stanzas, to the Countess of Pembroke. It is written in the quatrain, a species of verse sufficient of itself to destroy the spirit of the drama, but Daniel's genius was not dramatic; the poetical language is excellent, the moral reflections and sentiments engaging; the choral songs are composed in the spirit of the old tragedies, but the scenes of fiction bear more resemblance to Seneca than Shakespeare.

The Cleopatra of May is very inferior in delineation of character, variety of dialogue, knowledge of nature, fertility of fancy, and general dramatic effect. There is a coldness of coloring when compared with the glowing descriptions of Shakespeare and Dryden. The plot is composed of accidents, adventures, and surprises, and is

wanting in distinctness of character and forcible representation of manners. Cleopatra is lowered and degraded by duplicity, the misanthropy of Antony is coarse and beyond nature; but little attempt is made to move the passions, and narration usurps too much on the place of action; notwithstanding these defects, the tragedy is the work of a poet and a scholar. The versification is masculine and good, the language elevated and poetical, and the action uniform. I observe from some marks of imitation that Milton had read this play.

The fate and failure of Limberham is curious.[1] 'It expired on the third night, (says the author,) from having expressed too much of the vices it decries.' Langbaine explains this as meaning that it was condemned for exposing the keeping part of the town; not that the wit was too loose, but that the satire was too personal, and that the condemnation of Limberham was the vengeance of the faction ridiculed. Malone thinks he has somewhere read, that Dryden had Shaftesbury[2]

[1] The stage for introducing Limberham, the Duke's Theatre, in Dorset Gardens, was judiciously chosen, as it was a satire upon a *court* vice, it was deemed peculiarly calculated for that playhouse. The concourse of *citizens* thither is alluded to in the prologue to Marriage à la Mode; yet it was ill received and withdrawn. Printed in 1698.

[2] Scott says that the character of Limberham has been supposed to represent Lauderdale, whose age and uncouth figure rendered ridiculous his ungainly affectation of fashionable vices. Langbaine considers this as the best of Dryden's comedies; he traces a few of the incidents to the novels of Cinthio Giraldi, and some obscure French authors. Scott has observed, that this play has preserved some traces of the genuine manners of the age, as regards the promiscuous intercourse that took place between women of character and ladies of looser virtue. Such were the manners of the age

in view in the character of Limberham; others, I believe, have pointed out Lauderdale. The play was much altered, and that which was offensive on the stage was omitted in print; it is still, however, supposed to be extant in its original state, for Malone once saw a copy which Bolingbroke had found among the sweepings of Pope's study, (what gold dust was there!) in which a pen had been drawn across several exceptionable passages, that do not appear in the printed play.

The contract between Dryden and the King's Company now closed; the cause of disagreement is not known, and his three following dramas were exhibited at the theatre of their opponents, in Dorset Gardens.

Œdipus was written in conjunction with N. Lee, and published in 1679. The outline of Dryden's play was traced after the Œdipus of Sophocles: but he has inserted the Love Plot of Adrastus and Eurydice, and he has deviated from the conclusion of the Athenian drama, in the death of Œdipus. Creon (as Scott observes) is in his ambition and deformity a poor copy of Richard the Third, without his abilities—but the discovery of the guilt of Œdipus, which in Sophocles is at once proclaimed by Tiresias; in the

of Charles II. Nell Gwyn lived in familiar intercourse with the Duchess of Norfolk, and was it not by one bishop that the Duchess of Portsmouth was introduced to the chamber of the king, and to another, that the good dying monarch uttered his last earthly commands—Do not let Nell starve? In a letter to Mrs. Thomas, Dryden has warned her against falling into the license Mrs. A. Behn allowed herself; and says, 'I confess I am the last man who ought in justice to arraign her, who have been myself too much a libertine in most of my poems, which I am well contented I had time either to purge, or to see them fairly burnt.'

modern play is judiciously and skilfully deferred. The interest progressively increases. The language becomes more full of passion and affection, the dark allusions of the oracle grow more distinct, till the incestuous veil is slowly moved up, that discovers the wretched monarch's guilt, and the awful and avenging Nemesis appears. The first and third acts were wholly written by Dryden, and the superiority of his manner is clearly seen. Though he revised the whole, yet he was unable to prevent the extravagant sallies of 'Lee's blowing and puffing style'[1] from occasionally appearing. In Œdipus walking in his sleep, as in the incantation, Scott remarks how attentively Dryden was now imitating the style of Shakespeare.

Notwithstanding that the genius of the greatest poets has united to construct and adorn a tale of deep interest, with all the advantage that a well adjusted plot, powerful language, and elegant imagery could give, the history itself is so revolting[2] and disagreeable, as to preclude its success on a modern stage, or rather to prevent its representation. To Athenian ears it came with other language. To them it was a terrible and afflicting illustration of the doctrines of fatalism. It was the antient tragedy arrayed in all its terrific sublimity; it spoke of the relentless power of destiny, of man struggling in vain and helpless against

[1] See Dryden's preface to Troilus.

[2] Jacob in his lives of the dramatic poets, p. 83, says, 'Œdipus's *relish* of an embrace from Jocasta, after he had fled from his crown, and pulled out his eyes, is judged an impropriety.' When this play was revived about thirty years since, the audience were unable to support it to the end, the boxes being all emptied before the third act was concluded. This play was represented early in the season, 1678--9, printed in 1679.

the decrees of fate—of the awful and inscrutable designs of heaven. It was repulsive to no refined feelings, it attacked no moral prejudices, it met with no shuddering sensibilities that shrank from such a fiction with disgust. In fearful mysterious language it pointed to one predestined to the complicated crimes of parricide and incest; sacred and safe by the very enormity of his guilt from the justice of man, and devoted to the deities of darkness. I must express my astonishment that any modern writer of dramatic experience could select such a subject as this with the hope of investing it with a natural interest, or that he should have dragged from the recess of history, the obsolete doctrines of an exploded fatalism. Could the page of humanity afford nothing more instructive than this? could the imagination find nothing to adorn but the most offensive relic of Pagan belief?[1] Could not the sphere of observation be enlarged to a wider conception of nature, and a brighter delineation of life. Is there not scope for endless creations in the fresh combinations of human character, in the gradual developement of man's moral powers; the progressive advance of feelings, thoughts, and actions; in the perpetual conflict of interests, in the vicissitudes of fortune, in what new forms of society, and the changing institutions, manners, and habits of every country produce. Dryden, however, copied the models of French tragedy, and followed the example of the *great* Corneille. How differently did *He* look for subjects of sympathy, who col-

[1] See an impartial and instructive criticism on the Œdipus of Sophocles and Corneille in Portefeuille de Voltaire, ii. p. 1—59. 12mo. See also Scott's observations justly and elegantly written, Dryden's works, vi. p. 117.—123.

lected in Hamlet the broken wrecks and fragments of a noble intellect disturbed, who opened the recesses of a heart filled with vague anxieties, and wild perplexities of woe; who marked, as in Timon and Macbeth, the passions which nature pours into the general heart of man; and then brought them forth distinct with all the traces of individual character; with the peculiar combinations, the minute lines and shadowings which prove the truth of the ideal portrait; and which display that select observation, that deep discernment, that fine analysis, and that philosophical power which is at once the test and triumph of genius.

Dryden published his alteration of the Troilus and Cressida of Shakespeare, in the same year (1679)[1] under the title of 'Truth never found too Late,' an Essay on the grounds of Criticism in Tragedy was prefixed to this. Shakespeare probably took the outline of his play from the poem of Chaucer. Scott observes, that while in Dryden the arrangement of the plot is more artificially modelled, and the unity of the fable is better preserved; his other improvements show to little advantage beside the venerable structure to which they are attached: and he considers that Dryden deviated no less from historic truth in making Cressida innocent, than if he had represented Helen chaste, or Hector a coward. It would have been more natural to have brought about the catastrophe on the plan of Shakespeare and Chaucer, than by the forced mistake in which Dryden's

[1] The translation of Appian, published in 1679, by J. D. and called Dryden's Appian, was probably by Jonathan Dryden, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and author of some occasional verses. Scott's Life, p. 31.

Lovers are involved, and the stale expedient of Cressida's killing herself to evince her innocence. In his endeavours to simplify the plot, he has retrenched the whole scene between Ulysses and Achilles in the third acts, full of the purest and most admirable precepts, expressed in the most poetical and dignified language. It has been observed that the delicacy of Chaucer's tale has suffered even in the hands of Shakespeare: but in those of Dryden it has undergone a deeper deterioration, what is coarse in Shakespeare, has been dilated into ribaldry; and the character of Pandarus in particular is heightened in very offensive colouring. So far, says the editor, as the play is to be considered as an alteration of Shakespeare, I fear it must be allowed that our author has suppressed some of the finest poetry, and exaggerated some of his worst faults.[1] To these observations, I shall add that we cannot but be struck with the total change which Dryden's sentiments must have undergone, when one compares this play with Aurengzebe or Almanzor. The mixture of farce and tragedy, the buffoonery of Thersites, the gibes and jests of Pandarus, the playful artifices of Cressida, the coarse animal courage of Ajax, the distinctness and variety of character, the flexible manners, the natural passions and scenes drawn after life, the sparkling and salient wit, all are in strong contrast with the taste on which his earlier plays are modelled: when the Trojan warrior would have worn a flowing peruke under his helmet,

[1] Langbaine is most unusual in his candour, when he says, 'the last scene in the third act is a masterpiece, and whether it be copied from Shakespeare, or Fletcher, or Euripides, or all of them, I think it justly deserves commendation.'

and Cressida on the battlements of Troy, would have called, like Queen Mary, for her palatine and hood—but Shakespeare was before him, and he could not greatly err.

The enemies of Dryden who followed closely on the rear of his fame, and attacked him with lampoons when they found a part that was vulnerable, said that his pension being withheld (as it was by the poverty of the exchequer) gave rise to the Tragi-Comedy of the Spanish Friar.[1] It was acted with success in February, 1681, and produced much profit to the company. Nokes, the Liston of the day, (if Liston could ever have had a prototype) was admired in the part of Gomez, and Leigh in that of the Friar.

This play is one of the happiest and best of Dryden's numerous dramatic efforts. Johnson has remarked on its excellence, in the coincidence of the tragic and comic plot: and Scott observes, that the felicity of the plot does not consist in the ingenuity of its original conception, but in the minutely artificial strokes by which the reader is perpetually reminded of the dependence of the one part of the play on the other. These are so frequent, and appear so natural, that the comic plot, instead of diverting our attention from the tragic business, recalls it to our mind by a constant and unaffected allusion. In the comic part, though the intrigue is licentious, the language is not coarse or disgusting, the dialogue is lively, the character of Dominic[2] diverting, and full of

[1] Dr. Warton says, "Dryden was ordered by his confessor to write the Hind and Panther, as an expiation for having written the Spanish Friar." Dryden's poems, vol. iv. p. 1.

[2] The whimsical caricature of a Roman Catholic priest, in the person of Father Dominici, was received with rapture

the humour of the Old Comedy. I do not think the tragic part free from objection, the murder of the dethroned monarch by the queen, and her subsequent attempt to turn the odium of the crime on Bertram, because her affections were changed to another object, take all sympathy or attraction from her character, while the discovery that Elvira is the sister of Lorenzo, comes with a shock to our feelings, when we consider by how slight a chance they were prevented from an incestuous crime, and how long they persevered in a guilty intrigue. Scott sums up his judgment on the play: 'Upon the whole, as the comic part of this play is our author's masterpiece in comedy,' the tragic plot may be ranked with his very best efforts of that kind whether in Don Sebastian or 'All for Love.' After the revolution, it was the first play ordered by Queen Mary,[2] and honoured by her presence.

The two companies, the King's and the Duke's servants, had nearly ruined themselves by an expensive competition for many years, and by the inconstancy of the public. The audiences, it appears, fell off, for the playhouses were abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by all persons who desired the character of seriousness and decency. They now therefore agreed to cease hostilities, and were formed into one in 1682 When the coalition

by the prejudiced spectators, yet the satire was still more severe in the first edition; and afterwards considerably softened. It was, as Dryden called it, a Protestant play, and as Jer. Collier says, was rare Protestant diversion. It was the only play prohibited by James II. after his accession.

[2] See a very curious letter on this subject from the Earl of Nottingham, published by Dalrymple from a copy given to him by Bishop Percy, republished in the third volume of Malone, and in Scott's ed. vol. vi. p. 372.

took place, Dryden furnished them with a Prologue and Epilogue, which were spoken at the opening of the theatre in Drury Lane, November 16th, 1682. He joined with Lee in the Tragedy of the Duke of Guise; Dryden wrote the first scene, the fourth act, the first half of the fifth, and he furnished the epilogue which is not preserved in his works. In the latter part of the reign of Charles, the violence of political factions, and particularly the struggle between the protestant interest and the supporters of the Catholic religion, had displayed itself even upon the stage. On the side of the Whigs, Settle wrote his tragedy of Pope Joan, and Shadwell his Lancashire Witches, both levelled against the Papists. To destroy or weaken the influence which these writers might possess, the court opposed to them, Otway, Lee, and Dryden; not only the plays themselves, but the prologues and epilogues formed most convenient channels through which any political opinions, personal reflections, and party invectives might be delivered with effect. At this time, Lee called on Dryden to return the assistance which the former had afforded him in his tragedy of Œdipus. In the history of the Duke of Guise, Dryden had found a subject which he considered acceptable to the court, after the restoration, but what was applicable in 1665, drew more closely to a parallel with the events that took place in England in 1681. The power and influence of Shaftesbury, the contest between the court and whigs for the election of the sheriffs, the assembly of the parliament at Oxford, the situation if not the character of the Duke of Monmouth, his return to England against the king's authority, above all, the famous bill of exclusion

moved in 1660, against the succession of the Duke of York as a Papist, all found a striking historical resemblance to the events which took place in France connected with the intrigues of the Duke of Guise, and the proceedings of the league against the king of Navarre.

Dryden contributed the scenes which he had formerly written, and Lee added the rest from the 'Massacre of Paris,' a play then lying by him in manuscript. There were, however, circumstances connected with the plot not altogether agreeable to the feelings of the court. If the parallel were to hold between the Dukes of Monmouth and Guise, the fate of the latter must occasion alarms, or awaken affection in the parental breast of Charles. The representation was forbidden; the play lay in the hands of the Lord Chamberlain for more than half the year. At length, the tenderness and affection of the king broke down under the factious and undutiful conduct of his son; an open rupture was at hand; orders were given for Monmouth's arrest at Stafford, and consequently there could exist no motives of delicacy any longer to delay the representation.

This play is not distinguished for any high strain of poetic feeling, for the loftier flights of genius, or for any elaborate display of dramatic skill. Much of the descriptions and sentiments is taken closely from Davila, and the strong picturesque language of the historian is without difficulty raised into elegant and harmonious verse. In the character of Marmoutiere, an allusion to the Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth is probably intended. The story of Malecorn is said to be taken from Rosset's Hist. Tragiques, and one or two striking passages from Pulci. Sir Walter Scott

thinks that the last scene between the fiend and the necromancer horribly fine; but I do not feel certain that the parting speech of Malecorn would be considered natural; surely in his situation an agony of terror would overwhelm all reflection and stifle all argument. This part of the play failed in the representation; indeed the whole encountered a stormy, if not an unfavourable reception. Its poetry was but the vehicle for political sentiments; but as the court party increased in strength, its success became more assured.

Dryden's attachment to the Duke of York led him to write a long political prologue to Otway's Venice Preserved, (which was spoken April 21, 1682,) and another in honour of the Duchess, in May of the same year. Shadwell severely attacked him for the former; of the latter, Malone says he never saw a copy, but the original half sheet in Mr. Bindley's possession. Though Dryden's genius was fertile, his industry vigorous, and though practice had supplied him with the necessary expedients by which he might assist his exhausted powers, still the drudgery of his contract with the theatre was severely felt by him. The profit which he derived from each play was by no[1] means large, while the bread which he so laboriously earned was rendered bitter by the envy and malignity of party rivals and poetical foes. He was now in the full maturity of his powers; the assiduous study of our great original poets,

[1] If Southerne's biographer can be trusted, Dryden never made by a single play more than one hundred pounds; so that with all his fertility he could not, by his theatrical labours, make more than two hundred a year. Southerne reluctantly owned to Dryden, that he had cleared in his last play near £700. which appeared astonishing to Dryden. Life of Southerne.

and of the laws and province of poetry, as he surveyed them in their works, had given solidity to his judgment, and a correctness of taste far superior to any of his contemporaries; yet the intrigues of interested patrons had raised such men as Settle and Crowne to a temporary equality of fame with him. He spoke on this subject in his preface to Aurengzebe with feeling as with candour.[1]

We shall, therefore, scarcely be surprised that the mind of Dryden turned away from that branch of poetical exertion which had brought no profit without trouble and obloquy, which had been the scene of disgrace as well as triumph: and that he reposed with more pleasure upon the contemplation of forming an Epic Poem; of indulging the flow of his genius uncontrolled; and of contemplating the growing creations of his fancy, without any fear of the inconstancy of the public, the intrigues of favourites, or the detraction of rivals. He selected the same subject on which the youthful mind of Milton had long dwelt, and which it relinquished only for one still more congenial to its powers—King Arthur among the Saxons. He sketched out also the outlines of another subject, and this Malone thinks he preferred. It was 'Edward the Black Prince subduing Spain,[2] and restoring it to Don Pedro

[1] He says, 'I never thought myself very fit for an employment where many of my predecessors have excelled me in all kinds, and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgment, have outdone me in comedy.' Wycherly and Etheredge were probably the comic poets here in his thoughts. Malone's Life, p. 137.

[2] See Dryden's Letter to Dennis, March 1693-4. Scott's ed. vol. xviii. p. 114, 'but the guardian angels of monarchies and kingdoms are not to be touched by every hand, a man must be deeply conversant in the platonic philosophy to deal

the lawful Prince.' It is not for me to speculate on the manner in which Dryden's genius would have built up this great design, or to imagine the beauties which his imagination would have supplied; but his intention of introducing into the poem the characters of his chiefest friends and patrons, and the noblest families, does not present itself to my mind in a favourable view. He followed, he said, the example of Virgil and Spenser. At this distance of time, in the work of the Roman poet, the individual portrait, if such there was,[1] has melted into the historical character and disappeared. And the nobles of Spenser's age, Sidney, and Essex, and Raleigh, and the mistress of all hearts, the 'Maiden Queen' were more congenial in their romantic and elevated characters to the purpose of epic fable, than my Lord Rochester, Sir Charles Sidley, or even the merry monarch himself. To have preserved the likeness, yet arrayed them in the costume of the Plantagenets; to have given the dastard Rochester the valour of Cressy or Poictiers; to have made Mulgrave and Buckingham little less than heroes of Romance, would have been a work of difficulty even with Dryden's resources; nor would it have been without some feelings of surprise, that we should in no long interval of time, have beheld the same persons the

with these; and, therefore, I may reasonably expect that no poet of our age will presume to handle those machines, for fear of discovering his own ignorance; or if he should, he might, perhaps, be ingrateful enough not to own me for his benefactor.'

[1] I cannot agree with Pope's opinion. 'The Æneid was evidently a party piece, as much as Absalom and Achitophel.' Spence's Anec. p. 289. Pope would not have printed such an opinion as this, though he may have dropped it casually in conversation.

heroes of an epic, changing their state-dresses, reappear as the leading characters of Absalom and Achitophel. He who writes an epic poem, surely hopes to write for posterity. It is the production of too great an effort to be exhausted on the admiration, or to appeal to the flattery of contemporaries alone; and however some immediate applause might have repaid the poet for his courtesy and skill, all the laborious touches, the minute finishings, the graphic strokes that bring out the individual character, the delicate, half-ambushed praise, the characteristic sentiment which satisfied the poet, and delighted the patron, would have been squandered on the cold neglect and the indifference of the succeeding age. An eloquent writer has thus expressed his opinion of what the merits of this poem would have been, nor does his conjecture appear to me to be far from the truth. 'It probably would have been a vigorous narrative, animated with something of the spirit of the old romances, enriched with much splendid description, and interspersed with fine declamations and disquisitions. The danger of Dryden would have been from aiming too high, from dwelling too much, for example, on his angels of Kingdoms, and attempting a competition with that great writer, who, in his own time, had so incomparably succeeded in representing to us the sights and sounds of another world. To Milton, and to Milton alone belonged the secrets of the great deep, the beach of sulphur, the ocean of fire, the palaces of the fallen dominations glimmering through the everlasting glade, the silent wilderness of verdure and fragrance, where armed angels kept watch over the sleep of the first lovers, the portico of diamonds, the sea of jasper, the sapphire

pavement empurpled with celestial roses, and the infinite ranks of the cherubim blazing with adamant and gold. The council, the tournament, the procession, the crowded cathedral, the court, the guard-room, the chase, were the proper scenes for Dryden.'[1]

In 1681 Dryden produced, or to use Malone's favourite phrase, *issued out*, but without his name, his celebrated Satire of Absalom and Achitophel, the object of which was to gain friends for the King, and discredit the faction of Shaftesbury, Monmouth, and their adherents. Of this poem Dr. Johnson speaks in the following words: 'If it be considered as a poem political and controversial, it will be found to comprise all the excellencies of which the subject is susceptible, acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turns of language and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition. It is not, however, without its faults. Some lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreligiously licentious. The original structure of the poem was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David. The subject had likewise another inconvenience, it admitted little imagery or description, and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious. Though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes his

[1] See Ed. Rev. No. xxiii. p. 36.

fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest.'[1]

The plan of this poem, says Scott, has been uniformly and universally admired, not only as one of Dryden's most excellent performances, but as the most nervous and best political satire that ever was written. It is said to have been undertaken at the command of Charles. The time of its appearance was chosen with as much art, as the poem displays genius. Shaftesbury had been committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason, on the 2nd of July; and the poem was published a few days before a bill of indictment was preferred against him, the sensation excited by such a poem, at such a time, was intense and universal. The plan of the poem is not original, not only had a similar one been conceived, but the very[2] passage of Scripture adopted by Dryden, as the foundation of his parallel had been applied to Charles and his undutiful son. Shaftesbury was distinguished by the nickname[3] of Achitophel, before the appearance of this poem. The more deeply we examine that piece, the more reason we find to applaud the exquisite skill of the author. In the

[1] See Johnson's Works, vol. ix. p. 413. Murphy's edition.

[2] See Dryden's Works, ed. Scott, vol. ix. p. 198. Naboth's Vineyard, or the Innocent Traitor, copied from the original holy scriptures, in heroic verse, printed for C. R. 1679. In 1680 a small tract appeared, called 'Absalom's Conspiracy, or the Tragedy of Treason,' which furnished the general argument of Dryden's Poem, reprinted in the Harleian Miscellany.

[3] In the Badger in the Foxtrap, published it appears about 9th of July, 1681, four months before Dryden's Poem,

> Some call me Tory, some Achitophel,
> Some Jack-a-dandy, some old Machiavel.

character of Absalom, particularly, he had a delicate task to perform. He was to draw the misguided and offending son, but not the hardened reprobate; for Charles, notwithstanding his just indignation, was to the end of his reign partial to the unfortunate prince, and anxious to detach him from his desperate counsellors. Dryden has accordingly liberally transferred all the fouler parts of the accusation to the shoulders of Achitophel, while he is tender of the fame of Absalom. We may suppose, in doing so, that the poet indulged his own feelings; the Duchess of Buccleuch had been his most early patroness, and he had received personal favours from Monmouth himself. These recollections must have had weight with him, when engaged in composing this party poem, and we may readily believe him when he affirms, that David could not be more tender of the young man's life, than he would be of his reputation. In many other characters, that of Buckingham in particular, a certain degree of mercy is preserved, even amid the severity of satire; the follies of Zimri are exposed to ridicule, but his guilt (and the age accused him of most foul crimes) is left in the shade. Even in drawing the character of[1] Achitophel, such a degree of justice is rendered to his acute talents, and to his merits as a judge, that we are gained by the poet's apparent candour to give him credit for the truth of the portrait in its harsher features. It is remarkable that the only consider-

[1] Shaftesbury the author of the Characteristics, always mentions Dryden with aversion and contempt. It is said he felt more resentment on account of the imbecility ascribed to his father, than for all the biting and bitter satire heaped on his grandfather; he could bear the open and avowed hatred of the latter, but not the ridicule and mockery of the former.

able additions made to the poem, after the first edition, have a tendency rather to mollify than to sharpen the satire.[1] Sir Walter Scott has observed, that this poem is as remarkable for correctness of taste, as for fire and spirit of composition. I should say, that in comparing it with any of the celebrated satires of Pope, we find in Dryden a greater fertility of ideas, and a more copious variety of allusion, a more natural flow of versification, and more boldness of idiomatic expression. Dryden has the more commanding eloquence, and Pope the more polished and brilliant wit. In Pope the cadences are more nicely modulated, and the rhythm more equally balanced. There is more glitter of antithesis, more refinement of expression, more finish of execution, and a greater love of alliteration. In Dryden there is an ease, a negligence, a confidence in his powers, that overlooks petty inequalities, and does not stoop to minuter beauties; he has fewer marks of patient and assiduous toil; he never appears to aspire to the highest excellence; or to direct the eye of emulative genius towards an imaginary perfection.[2] Yet it would be difficult to distinguish many passages of one poet from the other, from any decided difference of execution. Dryden is often equally vigorous in conception, compact in expression, and musical in the flow of his verse. In the character of Zimri, for instance, I do not recognize any verse which the exactness of Pope's ear would have wished him to remodel,

[1] See Scott's Dryden, vol. ix. p. 200.

[2] 'Dryden did not come far short, but he wanted *study* and honest principles, and that *love of his art which is always requisite to make a complete artist.*' Upton on Shakespeare, p. 106.

or any part of the portrait, which he would not have been proud to own; and I think that Johnson in his well known and eloquent parallel, has for the sake of contrast, placed the peculiarities of the respective poets in too strong opposition. When Pope drew the portrait of Buckingham, Dryden had anticipated him in nice discrimination of character, in the exhibition of the follies, inconsistencies, and contradictions of that eccentric person. These were given with a truth, a spirit, and a pleasantry not easily to be surpassed. Pope therefore touched another string: and painted 'the lord of useless thousands,' in the hour of his deserted and miserable decline, in his solitary retreat, his ruined fortune, and his faded fame; but while Dryden in his masterly analysis has adhered to nature and truth, Pope, for the sake of a stronger contrast, has been led, I believe, considerably to exaggerate the severity of the circumstances, under which Buckingham expired. The phrase of 'Mimicked Statesman' does not seem correct: and surely 'Victor of his Health,' and 'Victor of his friends' is a mode of expression unusual, inelegant, and harsh.

Tate relates that this poem was undertaken at the desire of Charles II., in 1680, and Malone thinks that Dryden was employed on it about nine months. On the 28th March, 1681, the parliament was dissolved, and the 2nd of July following, Shaftesbury was committed to the tower. The first edition was sold in a month, a second appeared before December; two, if not three, editions were called for in the following year, and a sixth in 1684; the famous Atterbury[1]

[1] The poem was so popular that another Latin translation

translated it into Latin verse. It appears that Dryden paid little attention to his works after they were once made public; he was too indolent, or too busy to correct mistakes, or suggest improvements. He felt himself superior to the other writers of the age, and he could afford to be negligent, without injury to his fame. He had not that anxious desire for excellence, that tenderness for his own fame, that respect to the opinion of others, which could make him submit to the patient correction, the delicate and repeated attention, and those minute finishings, without which perfection is not to be attained, or approbation permanently secured. But in the poem now before us he added some lines to his character of Shaftesbury, for which his enemies[1] said he was paid by the nomination of a scholarship in the charter house being given to his son. Malone has spared no pains in the detection of this among other errors; indeed, deprived of the result of his patient and praiseworthy labours, a life of Dryden would be little better than a romance. He has found that the whole 'is a pure and unsophisticated falsehood.' Young Dryden was admitted on the recommendation of Charles II. as one of the governors of the institution.

In November, 1681, the grand jury at the Old Bailey returned ignoramus on the bill presented against Shaftesbury, and he was taken from the

was published, 4to. 1682, at Oxford, by Dr. William Coward, a physician of Merton College. The Poetical Reflections on a late poem, entitled Absalom and Achitophel, by a person of honour, folio, 1682, is ascribed by Malone and Scott to the Duke of Buckingham; but see Godwin's Lives of the Philipses, p. 186.

[1] This error has crept into the Biographia Britannica, but see Malone's Dryden, vol. i. p. 148.

court-house with shouts of applause. To perpetuate his triumph, a medal was engraved, which gave rise to Dryden's poem,[1]—'A Medal, or a Satire against Sedition.' Spence has mentioned, in his Anecdotes, on the authority of a catholic priest whom he met at Paris, that Charles suggested the subject (as he seems to have done others) to the poet. One day the king was walking in the Mall, and talking with the poet; he said,—'If I was a poet, and I think I am poor enough to be one, I would write a poem on such a subject, in the following manner.' He then gave him the plan of the medal. Dryden took the hint, carried the poem as soon as it was finished to the king, and had a present of a hundred broad pieces for it. This anecdote Pope seemed to confirm, and added, that Charles obliged Dryden to put his Oxford speech into verse, and to insert it towards the close of his Absalom and Achitophel.

On the merits of this poem, I have nothing to add to what has been said by Johnson and by Scott;[2] the latter of whom thinks it does not greatly suffer from being placed, as the subject naturally invites in comparison with Absalom and Achitophel. The latter, as a group of figures, presents greater scope and variety, and may therefore be more interesting than the portrait of an individual; but it does not more fully display

[1] There seems to have been some uncertainty, both among tories and whigs, concerning the author of the Medal. Settle himself did not recognize the hand of Dryden, and thought that the author of the Medal, and of Absalom and Achitophel is not one person, since the style and painting is far different, and the satires of a different hue, the one *being a much more slavenly beast than the other*. Scott's ed. vol. ix. p. 428.

[2] See Works, vol. ix. by Scott, p. 413.

the abilities of the artist. As might be expected, to his former poems many answers were quickly published; there was plenty of vulgar and virulent abuse in them, and but little poetry. Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, contributed his poetical reflections, which could add nothing to his fame. Sam. Pordage published an answer, under the name of Azariah and Hushai, (Monmouth and Shaftesbury,) and Dryden's old antagonist, Settle, appeared, under the name of Absalom senior, or Achitophel transposed, in about fifteen hundred lines. J. Warton suggested that he was assisted by Mr. Clifford, but that was not the case. Spratt, however, and some other of the party, publicly joined with him in the production. It is mentioned in this poem, that Dryden once intended to go[1] into holy orders. Against the Medal we find Pordage again writing, in a poem called The Medal reversed, wrongly ascribed to Settle. The medal of John Bayes was given to Shadwell; as also 'The Tory Poets' published in the same year. The author of Dryden's Satire to his Muse has not been discovered; I think that Malone is not unwilling to have it believed

[1] It was intimated by Dryden's enemies, that he chose the subject of Religio Laici to smooth the way to his taking orders. See the Revolter, a tragicomedy, acted between the Hind and Panther and Religio Laici, in 1687.

> But 'twas his wrath, because his native church
> Left his high expectations in the lurch;
> He saw the playwright laureate debauch'd
> By the times, vices which himself reproach'd;
> And by his grand reform of stage-pit fools,
> Judg'd his ability to manage souls, &c.

And Langbaine says, 'ever since a certain worthy bishop refused orders to a certain poet, Mr. Dryden has declared open defiance against the whole clergy; and since the

that Somers was the author, though he disavowed it in a conversation with Pope. Friendships and enmities were now formed according to political opinions. Dryden and Shadwell were of opposite parties, and though they had been on good terms, (for Dryden wrote a prologue to Shadwell's True Widow, in 1678,) yet political discussion as it grew more virulent, after the dissolution of the second parliament in 1679, destroyed all private friendship; the playhouses were applied to political purposes. Settle's Pope Joan, and Shadwell's Lancashire Witches, were applauded by the whigs; while Durfey, Otway, Crowne, and Dryden supported the party of the tories.

During the year 1682, a shower of lampoons from wretched and despicable scribblers appeared against our poet, as full of abuse as they were empty of wit, none of which he condescended to answer; at length, as their infamous charges grew bolder by impunity, he was roused to revenge, and punished them by his Mac Flecknoe. In this poem, as Malone observes, ample vengeance is taken on his corpulent[1] antagonist; a torrent of

church began the war, he has thought it but justice to make reprisals on the church.' Dram. Poet. p. 171.

In the Trial of the Poets (Buckingham's Works, i. p. 152) are these lines:

> 'In the head of the gang, John Dryden appear'd,
> That ancient grave wit, so long lov'd and fear'd;
> But Apollo had heard a story i' th' town
> Of his quitting the muses to wear the *black gown*,
> And so gave him leave, now his poetry's done,
> To let him turn priest, since *Reeve* is turn'd nun.'

See also a Poem, in Defence of the Church of England, in opposition to the Hind and Panther, folio, 1688. He is also said to have asked for the provostship of Eton College.

[1] In the vindication of the Duke of Guise, Dryden gave a

wit and satire, mixed with contempt, indignation, and derision, overwhelmed in one gigantic effort, and by a well directed blow, the wretched poet against whom it was levelled. The most cutting sarcasm was conveyed in skilful versification, which gave point and keenness to the edge of its wit, and which has been emulated and copied, but not exceeded even on the broader canvass of the Dunciad. It passed through several editions, and received some slight alterations. Shadwell, in the Dedication to his Translation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal, some years after, asserted that Dryden, when he was taxed with being the author of Mac Flecknoe denied it, with as solemn imprecations as his friend, the Spanish Friar, did the Cavalier Lorenzo.

Dryden's readiness and fertility of satire was surprising, instead of being exhausted by the brilliant efforts he had made, in a month after Mac Flecknoe was published, appeared the second part of Absalom and Achitophel, in which his two hundred lines appeared refulgent,[1] amidst the

severe flagellation to Shadwell, in which he says, 'although Shadwell has often called him an atheist in print, he believes more charitably of his antagonist, *and that he only goes the broad way, because the other is too narrow for him.*' In Cibber's Lives of the Poets, vol. iii. p. 76; a singular mistake is made. *Mr. Richard Flecknoe*, the *new laureat*, with whose name the satire is inscribed, was a very indifferent poet, &c.

[1] Scott has observed, 'that had Dryden limited his assistance to this fragment, he would have injured rather than assisted his coadjutor. Since it would have shone like a lamp in a dungeon, only to show the dreary waste in which it was inclosed; but he has obviously contributed much to the poem at large. Much of the character of Corah is Dryden's, so probably is that of Arod, and the verses descriptive of the green ribbon club. The character of Michal, of Dryden as Asaph, and some of the encomiastic passages

flatness and cold mediocrity of Tate's verses. Besides those of other scribblers of inferior note, the characters of Shadwell[1] and Settle appeared drawn with a terrible sagacity, and finished with such a felicity of touch, as is unequalled among satirical portraits.

In the same month he published his Religio Laici, it is addressed to a young friend,[2] the initials of whose name alone are known, and who translated Simon's Critical History of the Old Testament; the purpose of it was to explain the tenets of the Church of England in a plain and philosophical manner; and to defend it against the attacks of the Catholics and the fanatical dissenters.[3] Johnson allowed 'that this is a composition of great ex-

seem to show the extent of Tate's powers, when unsupported by his powerful auxiliary. They are just decently versified, but flat, common place, and uninteresting. This second part did not attain the popularity of the original.

[1] Settle was a dunce, but Shadwell was a man of talent; Rochester said of him, that if he had burnt all he wrote, and printed all he spoke, he would have had more wit and humour than any other poet. In comedy, he as much excelled Dryden in observation of nature, and delineation of character, as Dryden surpassed him in lively dialogue and witty repartee. See Shadwell's Preface to his Sullen Lovers, where he says, that Jonson is the man of all the world, he most passionately admires for his excellence in dramatic poetry.

[2] To H. D. See verses prefixed to E. Howard's British Princes. Scott conjectures that the person meant by these initials was Henry Dickenson, probably son of Edm. Dickenson, the well known author of Delphi Phœnecizantes, 12mo. &c.

[3] Sir W. Scott has given an analysis of this poem, vol. x. p. 4-8, he observes (p. 7.) that the style of this poem has been imitated successfully by Cowper in some of his pieces. Yet he has not always been able to maintain the resemblance; but often crawls where Dryden would have walked. The natural dignity of our author may be discovered in the lamest lines of the poem, whereas his imitator is often harsh and embarrassed. Both are occasionally prosaic, but in such

cellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diversified with the solemn, and the grave with the humorous; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perspicuity of argument; nor will it be easy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which, though prosaic in some parts, rises to high poetry in others, and neither hovers to the skies, nor creeps along the ground.' Although the object of his poem was to explain the tenets and defend the character of the Reformed Church;[1] and although it must have represented Dryden's serious attachment to it, yet some not ambiguous marks have been discovered in the argument, in which such an uncertainty of opinion is expressed, and such a bias to Catholic doctrines evinced, as foreboded the changes in his religious sentiments which he was soon openly to avow. He furnished Southerne, then young, with a Prologue and Epilogue to the Legal Brother, and contributed a Prologue to his second piece, the Disappointment,

passages Dryden's verse resembles good prose, and Cowper's, that which is feeble and involved. The second edition of this poem appears to be exceedingly rare, and escaped the researches of Malone.

[1] As Dryden wrote 'Religio Laici,' so Mason wrote 'Religio Clerici' in imitation. See his works, i. p. 427, he says of the poem,

> 'How few like him could write a layman's creed,
> Make logic's rules to metre's laws submit.
> Blend truth with fancy, argument with wit;
> Yet this he did! and in so smooth a lay,
> It satisfied the nicer ear of Gray,
> Who always held it as the guide supreme,
> Of bards employed on a didactic theme.'

In a note he says, I have often heard my friend give this eulogy to the 'Religio Laici' in nearly the same words. My friend, who admired Dryden even to excess, said that he attained his excellence in versification by study and practice.

in 1684, and he consoled him in a copy of verses at the ill success of his Wives' Excuse in 1692. Southerne in return, on account of Dryden's illness, wrote one half of the fifth act of Cleomenes, for 'Honest Nat Lee' Dryden had a great regard, and wrote several Prologues for him.

In 1663, he discontinued writing for the stage, though he was much straitened in his pecuniary resources, particularly by the uncertain payment of his salary. His letter to Lord Rochester for half a year's pension is most urgent. Yet though his wants were pressing, it is written without any meanness of solicitation, and his claims are modestly and fairly advanced; the manner in which he spoke of his sons is honourable and just. 'It is enough, he adds, for one age to have neglected Cowley, and starved Butler.' Let us hope that his petition was granted, and his uneasiness removed.

He assisted a new translation of the Lives of Plutarch with a preface, and life of the author. The first volume was published in 1683, it has long become obsolete, and been superseded by Langhorne's. The illustrious name of Somers appears as one of the writers. Having translated some years before 'A few of the epistles of Ovid, Dryden now added detached portions of Horace, Theocritus, Virgil, and uniting them to some smaller pieces, prologues, epilogues, &c., he produced, in 1683, the first volume of his Miscellany.[1] The

[1] The first volume, called *Dryden's Miscellany*, published in 1684, the second, entitled *Sylvæ*, in 1685, the third, *Examen Poeticum*, in 1693, the fourth, called *the Annual Miscellany*, 1694, after Dryden's death two more volumes were *issued out* in 1703, and 1708. Tonson published in 1716, a new and altered edition, the common one now in use.

last poem, Virgil's Tenth Eclogue, is by Sir W. Temple. Milton's Allegro and Penseroso, with the Lycidas, are inserted, and Marvell's beautiful little poem of the Dead Fawn is not overlooked.

Some months after, at the king's command, he translated the history of the League, from the French of Maimbourg. It was written, Malone says, to show that the sectaries and the long parliament in their solemn covenant had the French leaguers in view, and that all the disciples of Calvin must continue to hate monarchy, and love democratic constitutions.

Early in the following year, 1685, the second volume of the Miscellanies appeared. Dryden contributed several pieces, and two poems by Evelyn are inserted.

Charles II. departed this life on the 5th of February, 1684, in consequence, the political opera of Albion and Albanius, which Dryden had composed to celebrate the *new restoration* of his majesty on Shaftesbury's discomfiture, was not exhibited till the following June; owing to Monmouth's invasion, it was performed only six times; the expenses of preparing it for the stage were great, and the loss to the managers considerable.[1] This Opera was written, as I have said, for a political purpose, to celebrate the triumph of loyalty

[1] The music of the piece was entrusted to Louis Grabut or Grabu, the master of the king's band, whom Charles preferred to the celebrated Paule. It was generally admitted that the music was very indifferent. Scott has printed a satirical ballad on the subject written against the poet and musician, the following is a specimen:

Each actor on the stage his luck bewailing,
Finds that his loss is infallibly true,
Smith, Nokes, and Leigh, in a fever with railing,
Curse poet, painter, and Monsieur Grabu.

over sedition and dissension: it was at first composed in one act, and was designed as an introduction to the drama of King Arthur. Although the king had died while the opera was in rehearsal, a slight addition adapted it to the new fortunes of James, but there was a fatality against its success. There is nothing ingenious in the plot, or interesting in the story, but the versification is flowing, easy, and melodious. Scott has pointed out the desolation of London at the opening of the piece, and the speech of Augusta, as specimens of real poetry, and has mentioned the lyrical diction as most beautifully sweet and flowing.

Soon after the accession of James to the throne, Dryden became a convert to popery. Malone suspects that his wife, Lady Elizabeth, had long been a Papist, as her brother, the second Earl of Berkshire certainly was, and of Dryden's sincerity in this great and serious change, he entertains no doubt. He bred his children Papists, and he maintained his new faith during the reign of

Betterton, Betterton, thy decorations
And the machines, were well written we knew,
But all the words were such stuff, we want patience,
And little better is Monsieur Grabu.

Bayes, thou wouldst have thy skill thought universal,
Tho' thy dull ear be to music untrue;
Then whilst we strive to confute the rehearsal,
Pr'ythee leave thrashing of Monsieur Grabu, &c.

With thy dull prefaces still thou wouldst treat us,
Striving to make thy dull bauble look fair,
So the horned herd of the city do cheat us,
Still most commending the worst of their ware, &c.

See also an epigram in Langbaine's Dram. Poets, p. 152. on the same subject.

William, when his adherence to the religion of the abdicated monarch would prove an insurmountable obstacle to favour or preferment. I presume that no one would have questioned his sincerity, had his conversion not taken place at a juncture, when it would be peculiarly grateful to the new king: for James's sentiments had long been known to all. At the same time, the integrity of such a man as Dryden is not to be sullied by suspicions, that rest on what after all might prove a fortuitous coincidence of circumstances, the only favour which he ever received from James was an addition to his pension of £100 a year.[1]

To the memory of the old king,[2] his respect was testified by the publication of his Threnodia Augustalis. It has not much of that spirit of lyric poetry, which he afterwards so eminently possessed. The lines are constantly sliding into

[1] Dr. Johnson's sentiments on Dryden's conversion are expressed with soundness of argument, and with a candid and charitable interpretation of his motives, such as are not always to be found in the Doctor's writings: nor often in his conversation. Dryden's eldest son, Charles, is said to have been a catholic previous to his father's change, and to have contributed to it.

[2] A host of Pindaric odes appeared on this occasion, by Mrs. Behn, E. Arwaker, Duke, and many nameless poet-asters. Otway began a pastoral,

> Yet tender lambs, stray not so fast away,
> To weep and mourn, let us together stay;
> O'er all the universe let it be spread,
> That now the shepherd of the flock is dead.
> The royal Pan, that *shepherd of the sheep;*
> He who to leave his flock did dying weep,
> Is gone! ah! gone! ne'er to return, &c.

This was fortunately left unfinished: the most remarkable is 'the Quaker's Elegy,' written by W. P. a sincere lover of Charles and James, 31st March, 1685. Tears wiped off

the heroic couplet, and the argument descends into delineation of character, and description of the regal virtues, resembling the style of his didactic poems, more than a pindaric ode; yet he had studied Milton, and republished Lycidas. Though Scott considers the general effect less impressive, than might have been expected, yet he thinks there are some fine passages and striking pictures, as describing the joy of the people, on the fallacious prospect of the king's recovery.

> Men met each other with erected look,
> The steps were higher that they took,

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a second part on the coronation (22nd April) in the following lines, he must have been moved by the spirit,

> No sooner had this stranger seized my soul,
> But Rachel (his maidservant!) knock'd to raise me from my bed,
> And with a voice of sorrow did condole
> The loss of Charles!—whom she declared was dead.
> Charles dost thou mean, we king of England call,
> That lived within the mansion of Whitehall?
> (*Rachel*) Yes!—'tis too true!

Another more numerous shoal of small fry appeared to congratulate James on his accession; among others, Mr. Peter Ker, whose joy exceeds all common bounds, when he advises even the ships to run a ground:

> Let subjects sing, bells ring, and cannons roar,
> And every ship come dancing to the shore.

Johnson said, the title Threnodia Augustalis is not strictly classical, but Dr. Adam of Edinburgh has defended it. 'Threnodia, is a word purely Greek, used by no Latin author. Augustalis, denotes in honour of Augustus. Thus 'Ludi Augustales,' games instituted in honour of Augustus. Tac. An. i. 15. 54; so Sacerdotes, Sodales Augustales, ib. and ii. 83. Hist. ii. 95, &c. Scott's Dryden, vol. x. p. 60. A poem called 'Threnodia Triumphalis,' by F. Fisher, was published on Oliver Cromwell's death, 1658. Dryden's Elegy went through two editions in 1685.

> Friends to congratulate their friends made haste,
> And long inveterate foes saluted as they past.

he also remarks the judicious choice of topics, his *appropriate* praise, and his skilful management of the subject, in never having touched on the delicate theme of the queen.

Dryden probably did not take so important and awful a step, as changing his religious faith without having attentively studied the controversial writings on the question, and weighed the arguments of the respective churches. Consequently he was enabled without difficulty of preparation to undertake the defence of a paper written by Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, (who had avowed herself a Papist not long before her death) stating the motives which had induced her to change her religion. Some papers also in the writing of the King, though not believed to be his composition, were discovered with them. Stillingfleet published an answer in 1686, and the controversy was prolonged, but with no farther interference of our poet. It appears that he translated Varilla's History of the Revolutions, but did not publish it. Burnet takes the credit to himself of stifling the progress of this work by his reflections, which destroyed the character of the original.

The Hind and[1] Panther, a long and laboured poem of near two thousand lines, employed Dryden's attention during the years 1686 and 1687. It was widely dispersed and eagerly read, and

[1] 'This Poem is said to have been written at Rushton, near Huntingdon. There was an embowered walk, called Dryden's walk; an urn was placed there about the middle of the last century, with an inscription to Dryden's memory, and an allusion to the Poem.' MS. Comm. of Oct. Gilchrist.

soon went through three or four editions. It brought with it the double attraction of being written by the first poet of the age, and of offering a subject which engrossed all the interests, and agitated the passions of society, under a new form of controversy, conveyed in the artifice of fable, and adorned with the decorations of rhyme. The purpose of Dryden was to detail in poetry the arguments that had conducted him into the profession of popery; and to recommend an union between the Catholics and the Church of England, at least to persuade the latter to throw down the barriers by which the Catholics were kept out of state employments. Dryden's poem appeared about a fortnight after the king's memorable declaration of indulgence was promulgated; and [1] if (says his biographer) the Protestant dissenters ever cast their eyes on profane poetry, the Hind and Panther must have appeared to them a perilous commentary on the king's declaration, since it shows clearly that the Catholic interest alone was what the Catholic king and poet had at heart, and that however the former[2] might now find himself obliged to court their favour to strengthen his party against the established church, the deep remembrance of ancient

[1] See Scott's Dryden, vol. x. p. 89.

[2] Dryden has taken pains to have it believed that he was not incited to write this poem by any one: and his assertion is worthy of credit. If the poem had been written under the direction of James, the tone adopted to the *sectaries* would have been more conciliating. In order to procure as many friends as he could to the repeal of the Tests, and Penal Laws against the Catholics, James extended indulgences to the Puritans and Nonconformists, the ancient enemies of his person, family, and monarchy; but Dryden showed by his language, that he was not in the court secret.

feuds and injuries was still cherished, and the desire of vengeance on the fanatics was neither sated nor subdued. The fable is divided into three parts. The first is dedicated to the general description and character of the religious sects, and particularly to the churches of Rome and England; in the second, the general arguments for the controversy between the two churches are agitated: in the last part, from discussing the disputed points of theology, the Hind and Panther descend to consider the particulars in which their temporal interests were supposed to interfere with each other. I shall not repeat the well known criticism of Johnson on the plan of this poem, nor the admirable and eloquent observations of Scott, but I shall content myself with observing as regards the form of a parable, or fable in which it appears, that the divided opinions of its propriety relate to one of those questions of *degree* which are so open to dispute. The form of fables is familiar to us by use, and as it were consecrated by antiquity. We read them before we are aware of the improbability of the events, and the singularity of their structure. The arguments, as well as subjects, arise out of the interests and habits of the animals, or other instruments used by the fabulists. The wolf betrays his gluttony, the daw her vanity, and the fox his artifice. There is no elaborate train of reasoning required, no minute division of argument, no subtle processes of thought. In the pleasing simple fables of Æsop and Phædrus, the well known disposition and instinct of the animals merely invests itself with human speech, and the truths inculcated are familiar and recognized. But Dryden has at once plunged the beasts

of the forest into the investigation of the most intricate subjects, in decisions that would have required the erudition of general councils, and arguments that would have called forth the powers of the most dexterous polemics. The Hind enters into the subtlest points of the Nicene creed; and the Panther is engaged in the discussion of the Quinquarticular controversy. But the greatness of this error has in some degree rectified itself, for the length and intricacy of the arguments so take possession of the mind, that we forget the improbable machinery by which it is introduced, and consider that the poet himself is reasoning before us. When we have once recovered from the startling absurdity of the plan, the words Hind and Panther, as they occasionally recur in the dialogue, stand merely as signs or symbols of the opposing parties, and lose as it were the force of their original signification. The mind, by its own instinctive love of what is probable and true, rectifies the absurdities of the original plan, and though the subject is perhaps too abstruse and argumentative to be treated in verse, yet we rise from the perusal of it, admiring the skill and talents of the author who could present us a poem of such varied excellence; argumentative without been rugged or obscure, familiar without being mean and low, pointed in its satire, copious in its illustration, majestic in its language, magnificent in its descriptions, adapting itself to every change of subject, and winding its way with the most graceful ease and flexibility through all the intricate mazes of theological argument. It is but fair to remark, that Pope considered this poem as the most correct specimen of Dryden's versification. The lines beginning 'So when of old the Al-

mighty Father sate;' in the second part, Dr. Warton says, are the most splendid and sublime that Dryden ever wrote.[1]

This poem was not likely to escape the ridicule of the wits; accordingly, in the same year, appeared the Hind and Panther, transversed in the story of the Country and City Mouse, a composition in prose and verse, written by two young men, Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, and Prior, then a student at St. John's, Cambridge. Montagu is said to have written the preface, but it certainly appears that Prior had the largest share in the work. When Spence asked Lord Peterborough whether Halifax did not write the Country Mouse, in conjunction with Prior, "Yes," was the answer, "as if I were in a chaise with Mr. Cheselden here drawn by his fine horse, and should say, 'Lord, how finely we draw the chaise!'"[2] Prior does not seem to have been contented with his share of profit or of fame.

There is a story current on the authority of Spence, that Dryden was much affected at the unkindness of this satire, and feelingly complained of it. Johnson, as usual, disbelieved it; but Malone, who was cautious enough upon points like these, thinks that it has been related upon sufficient authority. Dean Lockier told it to Spence on his own knowledge; for his words

[1] The motto of this poem must not be overlooked.

Antiquam exquirite matrem
Et vera incessu patuit dea.

[2] Mr. Todd has noticed a satire, entitled, Ecebolius Britannicus, or a Memento to the Jacobites of the higher order; in which many of Dryden's phrases and sentiments are introduced and printed in the italic character. It occurs in The Loyal and impartial Satyrist, containing Eight Miscellany Poems, 4to. 1694. See Warton's Dryden, vol. ii. p. 9.

were (I have heard him say), 'For two young fellows that I have always been very civil to, to use an old man in so cruel a manner!' and he wept as he said it. It is possible that the story has not lost as it has come down to us. Dryden might have been vexed at the appearance of such able and unexpected antagonists, who attacked him with his own weapons, and he might have reflected on their conduct with asperity and emotion. In this year he produced his first ode on St. Cecilia's Day.[1] Some months after he wrote his Britannia Rediviva, on the birth of the young prince, and addressed a familiar epistle to his friend, Sir G. Etheredge, on his being appointed envoy to Ratisbon. Of this poem, Britannia Rediviva, Sir W. Scott thus expresses himself with all the feelings of a poet.—'Dryden, who knew how to assume every style that suited the occasion, writes here in the character of a devout and grateful catholic, with much of the *unction* which marks the hymns of the Romish church. In English poetry, we have hardly another example of the peculiar tone which the invocation of saints and an enthusiastic faith in the mystic doctrines

[1] Of this ode, Sir W. Scott says, (vol. xi. p. 166), 'The first stanza has exquisite merit, and although the power of music is announced in the following, in a manner more abstracted and general, and therefore less striking than when its influence upon Alexander and its chiefs is placed before our eyes, it is, perhaps, only our intimate acquaintance with the second ode that leads us to undervalue the first, although containing the original ideas so exquisitely brought out in Alexander's Feast.' Pope said—'Many people would like my ode to music better if Dryden had never wrote on that subject. It was at the request of Mr. Steele that I wrote it, and not with any thought of rivalling that great man, whose memory I do, and have always, reverenced.' Spence's Anecd. p. 12.

of the catholic faith, can give to poetry. To me, I confess, *that* communion seems to offer the same facilities to the *poet*, which it has been long famous for affording to the painter: and the Britannia Rediviva, while it celebrates the mystic influence of the sacred festivals of the Paraclete and Trinity, and introduces the warlike forms of St. Michael and St. George, has often reminded me of one of the ancient altar-pieces, which it is impossible to regard without reverence, though presenting miracles which never happened, or saints who never existed. These subordinate divinities are something upon which the imagination, dazzled and overwhelmed by the contemplation of a single Omnipotent Being, can fairly rest and expand itself. They approach nearer to humanity, and to comprehension; yet are sufficiently removed from both to have the full effect of sublime obscurity.'

At the time Milton published his immortal poem, Cowley was in the full possession of the public admiration. He possessed great talents and considerable acquirements. He wrote in the style and taste of the age, and his superior genius placed him at the head of his school. Milton's poem was formed on models essentially different; and it demanded a comprehension of mind, an extent of knowledge, a purity of taste, a lofty imagination, in fact, a conception of the power and provinces of poetry so exalted, that it met with admirers, perhaps with readers, only among those of deeper learning and more cultivated minds; but every year shook off something from the fragile blossoms of Cowley's fame, and Paradise Lost slowly made its way by its own excellence, as a purer and better taste gradually revived. Dennis says, it took thirty years, or more, before the great

merit of Milton was generally known; and near thirty years certainly elapsed before a second edition of his exquisite early poems, the rich and ripened fruitage of his studious youth, were given to the public. A new edition of Paradise Lost was now called for, and Tonson, with the assistance of Somers and Atterbury, printed a splendid one, in folio. Above five hundred subscribers were obtained, and Dryden contributed his famous hexastich, which Malone thinks was suggested by the couplet of Selvaggi.[1]

There is some particular year of misfortune in the life of almost every man, in which the adversity that has been invisibly accumulating comes on with unexpected weight and singular combinations. Good fortune in some, and great prudence and foresight in others, may put aside the blow; but the expectation of passing life without feeling this shock is not formed on the lessons of experience. I wish that I could say, in this respect, that Dryden escaped the common lot of humanity; but alas! he was to be awakened from his dreams of preferment and wealth, by the abdication of the king, and a change in the succession, most adverse to his interests. In August, 1689, he lost his office of laureate, and with it full three hundred pounds a year. To add to his mortification, both places of poet and historiographer were given to Shadwell. Dryden could not hold them as being a catholic, and Shadwell received them

[1] Gesner, in his notes on Claudian (vol. i. p. xliii.), says that Dryden's lines are taken from the following Greek Epigram.

Εἰν ἑνι, βιργιλιοιο νοον, και μουσαν Ομηρου
Κλανδιανον ρωμη, και βασιλεις ἐθεσαν.

as being a whig. Deprived of his certain and official income, he was obliged to return to the stage for support. In 1690, he produced his tragedy of Don Sebastian, which was acted with applause; and his comedy of Amphitryon was also successful. Dryden prefixed the following motto to his tragedy, proclaiming that seven years, the interval since the production of the Duke of Guise, had not impaired his power of invention, nor dimmed the fire of his genius:

——— nec tarda senectus
Debilitat vires animi, mutatque vigorem.

The biographers of Dryden have considered the poet to have been particularly happy in the choice of his subjects, the character of Sebastian presenting all that was heroic and dignified, and the history of his fate terminating, as it were, in that awful uncertainty, which is one of the regions in which poetry loves to dwell. The changes of fortune during his life, and the mysterious disappearance after the overthrow of his ambition, was a subject in which the imagination might wander at will, without offending the majesty of truth.

The characters are separated and set off in fine poetical contrast; Sebastian, open, brave, impetuous, full of all regal virtues,—every inch a king. Dorax represents one whose good and generous qualities have been met by injustice and oppression, and driven back into the disappointed and disordered mind. His stern misanthropy, his sullen pride, his high and haughty demeanour, the bitterness of his hatred, that discontent with himself, which too proud to avow, he is obliged to feel, 'his long stride and sullen port;' his passions and feelings have been brought by Dryden into one of the most powerful characters

which he ever sketched. Muly Moloch is the old tyrant in tapestry, the fierce Saracen, the hot savage Moor, yet with generosity enough to save him from our hatred. In Benducar is the cool, crafty, fawning villain. Almeyda's violence has too much, I think, of fury in its sentiment, and rant and hyperbole in language.

Johnson says of this play, that some sentiments leave a strong impression, and others are of excellence universally admired. This, his last biographer considers to be but meagre commendation when applied to the chef-d'œuvre[1] of Dryden's dramatic works, in which he had centred in the effort the powers of his mighty genius, and the fruits of his long theatrical experience; accordingly, Shakespeare laid aside, it would be difficult, he says, to point out a play containing more animating incident, impassioned language, and beautiful description. Perhaps the truth lies between these two opinions. Although in Dryden we must praise a happy disposition of accidents, and a considerable variety of characters;[2]

[1] Don Sebastian has been weighed, with reference to its tragic merits, against 'Love for Love,' and one or other is universally allowed to be the first of Dryden's dramatic performances. To the youth of both sexes, the latter presents the most pleasing subject of emotion; but to those whom age has rendered incredulous upon the romantic effects of love, and who do not fear to look into the recesses of the human heart, when agitated by darker and more stubborn passions, Don Sebastian offers a far superior source of gratification. Scott's Works, vii. p. 279; yet this play, on the first night of representation, was only *endured*. 'The audience,' says Dryden, 'were weary with much good nature and silence;' when curtailed and altered, it became a great favorite with the public. Acted and printed in 1690.

[2] As when Almeyda says,

> How can we better die than close embrac'd,
> Sucking each other's soul, while we expire!

though there is much that is masterly in the conception and execution of his subjects, yet our praise cannot be bestowed without some qualification. The incestuous connexion between Sebastian and Almeyda is a great blemish to the plot; and the expressions of both parties, when their guilt is discovered, are such as we must consider with abhorrence. Some previous sentiments of Almeyda are too voluptuous to be approved; the manners of the Mahometans are grossly violated,[1] and the comic scenes are too broad. After all, and with all its merits, this declamatory kind of drama, the school of the French theatre, with its elevated sentiment, its long-drawn similes, and its majestic and melodious verse, must not be compared to the pliancy, the fire, the vivacity, the truth, the flashes of comic genius, the depth of tragic passion, the genuine representations of life, the boldness, the variety, of our old dramatists, embodying in their noble dramas the passions and follies and virtues of men, shaking us with terror, or melting us with tears, and making us forget all their anomalies, and even some absurdities in the surpassing splendour of

The following is objectionable on another account:

> My father's, mother's, brother's death I pardon,
> That's somewhat sure, a mighty sum of murder.
> Of innocent and kindred blood struck off,
> My prayers and penance shall *discount* for these,
> And beg of Heaven to *charge the bill* on me.

[1] Human sacrifices are offered up to Mahomet, and they are represented as worshiping the image of Jupiter, in the Conquest of Granada. A solecism, as Langbaine observes, scarcely more pardonable than placing a pistol in the hand of Demetrius, which Dryden justly censured. On the impropriety of the *classical* allusions in the mouth of Mahomedans, Addison had remarked in the Guardian, No. 110.

their creations. In the very best of Dryden's plays, there is something of an artificial medium which the poet has interposed between use and nature; we see her features in a glass darkly. It is a style formed after the rules of criticism, from arbitrary opinions and narrow views; its illustrations are tedious, its events improbable, its catastrophes ridiculous. It is wanting in real force, and rapidity of thought and language; it gives no emphatic imitation of real individual character, no strong representation of powerful feeling; the perfume is drawn through a limbec before it reaches us. In Shakespeare, it comes with all the woodland fragrance on its wing, fresh blowing from the violet banks, and breathing the vernal odours. Dryden's composition is like the artificial grotto raised amid level plains, sparkling with imported minerals, and glittering with reflected and unnatural lights. The old drama resembles rather the cavern, hewn from the marble rock by nature's hand, whose lofty portals, winding labyrinths, and gigantic chambers, fill the mind with wonder and delight. The one opens into decorated gardens, trellised bowers, and smooth and shaven lawns; the other lies amid nature's richest and wildest scenes, the glacier, and the granite hills above,—wild flowers, and viny glens and sunlit lakes below.

The play of Amphitryon is founded on the old comedy of Plautus, with some necessary alterations of the plot, and some few improvements in the incidents. Dryden did not judge incorrectly of the taste of his audience, for it was favourably received, and Scott considers it as one of the most favourable specimens of his comic muse,[1]

[1] Malone recovered from Tonson's papers a letter and copy of verses, addressed to the publisher, on the merits of

but taste has grown more capricious, or more refined in modern days. A few years since I was present at its revival, when the skill and cleverness of the best comic actors could not save it from disgrace. The feelings of the audience did not seem from the first to be engaged in the exhibition. The manner of thinking was not theirs; the incidents were strange, the characters and customs beyond the common line of observation, the wit was cold and did not strike.

In the days of Plautus, it probably kept the benches in a roar, and the original play, even now, when the mind, through the language, is thrown back into the feelings of the time; and when the improbabilities of the dramatic scene are softened down in the perusal, may be read with much pleasure. That the gods were wont occasionally to descend from Olympus for earthly recreation, and to assume the shape of men was an established belief, or a familiar tale. Jupiter and Mercury, as Amphitryon and Sosia, were old friends to the smutched artificers and shopkeepers of the Tiber, while the dresses and masks rendered the illusion perfect. I remember that the endearing terms of greedy cupidity in which Phædra addresses the golden goblet, that was offered as a bribe, seemed to disgust the audience as something unnatural; the character of the impudent, cheating household slave in Sosia, and the drollery, the disguise, the knavish tricks of Mercury, which made the children of Romulus chuckle, appeared in its humour and conceits coarse and low. The play was heard throughout with impatience and dislike.

Amphitryon, by Milbourne, who afterwards attacked Dryden with such bitterness and malignity; they are full of praise. See Works, vol. viii. p. 5.

The opera of King Arthur was performed in 1691, its own merits, and Purcell's beautiful music ensured its success. Dryden had long hoped, as I before mentioned, to have enjoyed leisure and competence sufficient to enable him to devote himself to the composition of an Epic poem on the History of Arthur. That time however unfortunately never arrived: and we have lost, according to Sir Walter Scott's opinion,[1] a poem probably formed upon the model of the Ancients, classical and correct, though wanting in the force, which reality of painting and description never fails to give to Epic narrative. Arthur would have reminded us of Achilles, and the sameness of a copy would have been substituted for the spirit of a characteristic original; but we should have found picturesque narrative detailed in most manly and majestic verse, and interfused with lessons teaching us to know human life, maxims proper to guide it, and sentiments which ought to adorn it. Certainly, if this poem had been executed with the spirit, the elegance, the picturesque narrative, the masculine language, the 'long resounding march of verse' that distinguishes his fables, it would have formed a rich and noble addition to his fame, and to our poetry. We must regret, says his biographer, that avarice or negligence withheld from him the means of a comfortable support: when he had abandoned all hopes of executing his greater work, he adapted his intended subject to an opera, a fairy tale in verse.[2] Scott says, the scene in which Emmeline recovers

[1] See Scott's Dryden, vol. viii. p. 110.

[2] The principal incident in King Arthur is copied from the adventures of Rinaldo, in the haunted grove on Mount Olivet, in the Gier. Liber. of Tasso.

her sight, when well represented, never fails to excite the most pleasing testimony of interest and applause. The language and ministry of Grimbald, the fierce earthly demon, are painted with some touches that arise even to sublimity. The conception of Philidel, a fallen angel, retaining some of the hue of heaven, who is touched with repentance, and not without hopes of being finally received, is an idea, so far as I know, entirely original.

This piece was written for the conclusion of the reign of Charles, and had a political tendency, but the Revolution ruined Dryden's prospects of preferment, and put a strong restraint on the avowal of his opinions; consequently his poem sank into a pleasing description of the wonders and adventures of a fairy tale. It was received with great applause, and is the only one of Dryden's plays which keeps possession of the stage.[1] I shall observe, if any one conversant with the poetry of Milton, will attentively read this play, and Don Sebastian, he will acknowledge that Dryden had now diligently studied the works of that great poet, and transplanted, with taste and judicious selection, some of his fine combinations of language, and beautiful expressions of thought. The lyrical dialogue between Cupid and the genius, was in the recollection of Gray, when he wrote the Descent of Odin.

In May 1692, his tragedy of Cleomenes was acted: Dryden was too ill to finish it, and it was

[1] The battle between Arthur and Oswald, with *sponges* in their *hands filled with blood*, which they occasionally squeeze on each other, beats any stage direction in absurdity that I ever remember; it would have formed a fine duel in Tom Thumb.

obligingly completed by his friend Southerne.[1] This is one of the most successful specimens of the heroic drama which he left; nor do I know that any thing can be well added to the observations which his last eminent biographer and critic has made. The character of Cleomenes, Dryden has drawn with admirable spirit and precision. It was peculiarly suited to his genius, for though sometimes deficient in the pathos, and natural expressions of violent passion, he never fails in expressing, in the most noble language, the sentiments of that stoical philosophy, which considers sufferings rather as subjects of moral reflection, than of natural feeling. Dryden has softened the character of his Spartan Hero by the influence of those chaste and tender romantic affections which thrive best in bosoms rendered by nature and philosophy inaccessible to selfish feeling. The haughty and unbending spirit, the love of war, the thirst of honour proper to the Lacedæmonians complete the character of Cleomenes. Cleonidas is a model of a Spartan youth, which seems to be taken from the character of Hengo in the Bonduca of Beaumont and Fletcher. The wife and mother of Cleomenes seem to be sketched after those of Coriolanus: the former exhibiting the mild gentle disposition, the latter the high souled magnanimity of a Spartan matron. Ptolemy is a silly tyrant, Sosybius a wily minister, and Cleanthes a friend and confidant, such as tyrants, ministers, and confidants in tragedies usually are. Cassandra is not sketched with any peculiar care;

[1] Southerne revised and finished the latter half of the fifth act. See the Dedication to his Play, called 'The Wife's Excuse.' Malone erroneously reads the 'fifth act' for *half* the fifth act.

her snares are of a nature not very perilous to Spartan virtue, for her manners are too openly licentious. She may be considered as furnishing the original hint for the much more highly finished character of Zara in Congreve's Mourning Bride. The rabble scene, the poet tells us was introduced to gratify the more barbarous part of the audience. This play, when first published, met with opposition from the government, being supposed to allude to the situation of the exiled king. The exertions, however, of Lord Rochester and others, as well as the evidence of its inoffensive nature removed this. Mrs. Barry[1] distinguished herself by her representation of the first character.'

There is nothing in this play strongly to excite the passions, or to awaken a thrilling interest in the fortunes of the characters; but the Spartan courage, lofty virtue, unbending firmness, generous and affectionate disposition of Cleomenes, are felt with delight. The character of Cassandra would have admitted a finer touch, and more varied colouring; the plot brings with it few changes that surprise, and its termination, though faithful to history, does not satisfy the mind, as it involves only the innocent and brave in misfortune, and leaves the guilty and 'the weak, the voluptuous tyrant and his abandoned mistress unpunished and secure.

We are now arrived at the close of Dryden's dramatic efforts; he had possession of the stage for a period of thirty years, from 1664 to 1694, and during that time his industry, and fertility of invention bestowed on it no less than seven and twenty dramatic performances. I am sorry

[1] See Cibber's account of Mrs. Barry at this time, in his Life, as quoted by Malone, vol. iii. p. 227.

to add that his last piece, Love Triumphant, was condemned by the universal consent of the town. This unsuccessful play is so inferior to some of his later productions, that I have often, while reading it, considered, whether in the hard necessities of his later days, he might not have produced a piece written in earlier life[1] and which had been deservedly neglected by him, while the unimpaired vigour and luxuriance of his genius supplied him without difficulty. The plot turns on the indulgence of that incestuous passion which I have observed and censured before; and on which the genius of Dryden seemed to look without a sufficient consideration of its offensive nature.[2] There are no characters which command our respect or love. Veramond's feelings towards Alphonso are those of aversion; the incidents are strained and improbable: and the termination is effected by a sudden and inconsistent change in the feelings of the king which the speech of Celidea effected. But as Scott observes, the hatred and aversion of Veramond was not likely to be abated by the objects of them turning out to be father and son, nor much

[1] Scott owns that the turn of the dialogue is in our poet's *early* manner, and in the most laboured scenes, he has recourse to rhyme, which he had so long discarded, my conjecture, therefore, I think, is not improbable. Scott says, 'If we except Amboyna, our author never produced a play when the tragic part had less interest, or the comic less humour.'

[2] Stories turning on incestuous passion have seldom been successful on the *modern* stage. On this account alone Garrick denounced his intention of reviving the play of 'King and no King.' Phædra and Hippolytus, though powerfully supported, failed for the same reason: and even the excellences of Don Sebastian were unable to expiate the disgust excited by the discovery of his relation to Almeyda. See Scott's Dryden, vol. vi. 121. viii. 333.

soothed by the circumstance of their making him prisoner in his own metropolis. Yet the tyrant of Arragon alters his whole family arrangements and habits of mind, and takes his hated foes into his family and bosom, merely in order that the play may be concluded.[1]

Literary exertion was now doubly necessary to secure to Dryden the means of livelihood; and from this time to the close of his life, he will be found assiduously and laboriously employed. He translated three of the satires of Juvenal, and the whole of Persius;[2] and with the assistance of

[1] See a letter preserved by Malone on the fortune of this play, 22nd March, 1673--4, when the writer says; 'The success of Southerne's Fatal Marriage will vex huffing Dryden and Congreve to madness.' Dryden's play is a Tragi-Comedy, but in my opinion, one of the worst he ever wrote, if not the very worst; the comical part descends beneath the style and show of a Bartholomew Fair Drill. It was damned by the universal cry of the town, nemine contradicente, not the conceited poet. He says in his prologue that this is the last the town must expect from him, he had done himself a kindness, had he taken his leave before:

[2] For a character of this translation, see Gifford's introduction to Persius, p. vi. 'The majestical flow of his verse, the energy and beauty of particular passages, and the inimitable purity and simplicity which pervade much of his language, place him above the hope of rivalry, and are better calculated to generate despair, than to excite emulation; but Dryden is sometimes negligent, and sometimes unfaithful. He wanders with licentious foot careless alike of his author and his reader, and seems to make a wanton sacrifice of his own learning. It is impossible to read a page of his translation without seeing that he was intimately acquainted with the original, and yet every page betrays a disregard of its sense. By nature Dryden was eminently gifted for a translator of Persius. He had much of his austerity of manner and closeness of reasoning. Yet by some unaccountable obliquity he has messed those characteristic qualities so habitual to him, and made the poet flippant and unconsequential.'

his sons, and Messrs Duke and Creech, he gave to the public a complete translation of the two great satirical poets. In 1691, he wrote a short preface to Walsh's Dialogue on Women; and in February of the same year, he composed an elegy on the Countess of Abingdon, under the name of Eleonora. It has been observed that one singularity attended this production. It was written on a person whom he had not seen, at the request of another whom he did not know.

He prefixed, in 1692, an account of Polybius to Sir Henry Sheare's translation, and in 1693, he published the third volume of his miscellanies. Some poems of Ovid and the poetry of Hector and Andromache in the Iliad are from his pen. Messrs Yalden, C. Hopkins, and N. Higgens are the heroes who shine in this volume; and Johnny Crowne closed it with the translation of the Lutrin; an unfinished poem on the civil wars by Cowley, from a manuscript, formed an attraction to the book.

At this time, Congreve astonished the public by such an early display of brilliant wit, comic force, knowledge of character, as could be expected only to result from a familiar acquaintance with society, and extensive observation of mankind. Yet Congreve was scarcely of age,[1] when his first play, the Old Bachelor, was performed. I am not aware that any English poet,

[1] Wycherly wrote his first play, Love in a Wood, at nineteen. The Plain Dealer when he was twenty-five, which he wrote in three weeks. As regards both Wycherly and Congreve, I believe it must be conceded, that the mirror which *their Thalia* held up, did not reflect with truth the manners of their age; I believe it is Madame de Stael, who says, 'Nothing is less like English manners, than English comedy;' true, for it was but an imitation of the French.

with the exception perhaps of Chatterton, ever exhibited such a precocity of talent: and this was shown in a department of poetry in which the minds of youthful poets are seldom seen to expatiate. Congreve, however, sought neither 'the flowery meadow, nor the purling stream,' but was seen with his youthful pencil lightly sketching the foibles, analysing the passions, and tracing the characters of mankind. We know, that at a far more advanced age than this, Dryden considered a comedy required such powers of execution and such a delicacy of conception as to make him regret his rashness in intruding himself to the public under the auspices of Thalia. In preparing this play for the stage, Dryden willingly lent the assistance of his great experience to the young poet; by whom he was repaid, with a very sincere attachment, and a kindness that extended beyond his life. Some lines prefixed to the Double Dealer, are given to Dryden, of which Malone says, 'they are of such excellence, that however often they are perused, they can never cease to be read with delight and admiration.'

In 1694 Tonson published the Annual Miscellany, to which Dryden contributed a version of the third Georgic, and an Epistle to Sir Godfrey Kneller.

Dismissing now all inferior engagements, having relinquished the stage for ever, and anxious, by the success of some great work, to save himself from the approach of poverty in his declining life; Dryden, in the full maturity of his practised powers, with great knowledge of the laws of poetry, and with all the dexterity and grace that arises from experience and exercise, commenced

his translation of Virgil's Æneid.[1] Johnson says, that the nation considered its honour interested in the event. Sir William Dolben gave him the various editions of the author. Dr. Knightly Chetwood furnished him with the Life of Virgil, and the preface to the Pastorals; Addison supplied the arguments of the several books, and an Essay on the Georgics. The first lines of this great poet, which he translated, he wrote with a diamond on a pane of glass in one of the windows of Chesterton House, in Huntingdonshire, then the residence of his kinsman and namesake. To those who look with reverence to the Genius Loci, which virtue and talent have sanctified by their residence, it will be far from uninteresting to hear, that the version of the first Georgic and a great part of the last Æneid were made at Denham Court, in Buckinghamshire, the seat of Sir William Bowyer; and that the seventh Æneid was translated at Lord Exeter's, at Burleigh: thus the venerable oaks, and the grey battlements of that princely mansion, are hung with poetic tablets and noble recollections of departed genius; no less are the grottos of Twickenham and the glades of Dawly filled with the fondest remembrances of the past; the gardens which Pope loved, and the retreat which Bolingbroke adorned, will ever have an interest to the mind of taste, beyond what the charms of nature could alone impart. This feeling will preserve its emotions, though it must change its object: and the next generation will

[1] Supped at Mr. Edward Sheldon's, where was Mr. Dryden the poet, who now intended to write no more plays, being intent on his translation of Virgil. He read over his Prologue and Epilogue to his Valedictory Play, now shortly to be acted. *Evelyn's Diary*, p. 39.

be attracted with a delightful curiosity, where Genius has built his bower among the woods of Abbotsford; or linger with a pensive interest, where the footsteps of wisdom and of virtue have been reflected in the waters of Keswick.

It was resolved to print this work by subscription, as the Paradise Lost had been published some years before. Pope was employed six years on his translation of the Æneid; it appears that Dryden began his Æneid in the summer of 1694, and it was published in the July of 1697. He was dealt with in a penurious manner by old Tonson, who would allow him nothing for the annotations which he was anxious to make. It would take seven years, said Dryden, to translate Virgil exactly. Malone has endeavoured to trace with accuracy the precise sum which Dryden received for this work; there is some difficulty in ascertaining the truth, for there was a double list of subscribers at different prices;[1] and Tonson kept back some money to defray the expenses of the plates,[2] but probably Dryden received more than twelve hundred pounds. Pope gained by his Homer above five thousand.

[1] See Scott's ed. of Dryden's Works, vol. xiii. p. 281, where is a list of the two sets of subscribers.

[2] Tonson seems to have driven some hard (not to say not quite honest) bargains with our poet. In one letter he says, 'You know now money is very scrupulously received. In the last which you did me the favour to change for my wife, besides the *clipped money*, there were *at least forty shillings brass*.' Again, I expect £50 in *good silver*, not such as I have had formerly. I am not obliged to take gold, neither will I, nor stay for it, four and twenty hours after it is due. You always intended I should get nothing by the second subscriptions, as I found from first to last.' Again, upon trial, I find all your trade are sharpers; and you not more than others, therefore I have not wholly left you. It appears that the translation of Virgil was sent to the press when only eight books of it were finished.

Much has been said in dispraise of Dryden, for having lavished his dedications too plentifully on his patrons in this work, but it was in the taste of the age; there was, at that time, no republic of letters, a few men of literature and rank were the arbiters and guides of public judgment. The booksellers looked to their fiat to regulate their bargains with the author; besides the nobles of that time were liberal and rich; there were no manufacturers, or merchant princes to rival them in opulence, and exceed them in prodigality, and they were so separated by wealth and rank from the common order of society, many of them being men of very cultivated minds and elegant knowledge, and not a few themselves authors, that praise[1] might be offered without meanness, and assistance solicited without servility. It is sufficient vindication of Dryden's integrity to say, that he resisted Tonson's urgent importunity to dedicate the works to King William. The disappointed bookseller turned for assistance to the engraver, who placed a hooked nose on all the plates representing Æneas,[2] in honor of the Nassau prince.

[1] See Burke's opinion of Dryden's dedications in a conversation with Malone. P. Works, ii. p. 322. Dryden had frequent recourse to the bounty of the Earl of Dorset. This is proved by some manuscript letters of his in the possession of the Dorset family, and which contain some particulars unfit for publication.

[2] MS. Harl. p. 3, Brit. Mus. are the following well known verses:

Old Jacob, by deep judgment sway'd,
To please the wise beholders,
Has placed old Nassau's hook-nosed face
On poor (young) Æneas' shoulders.

Dr. Johnson has spoken of the merits of this translation, though he has not entered into a critical exposition of its beauties; but as it seems to have united the suffrage of the critics, and the approbation of the public, I shall just observe, that while I confess it to possess many and various excellencies, while I believe that it has enriched our language with new forms of expression, and new modulations of verse, I do not think that it adequately represents the peculiar beauties of the original poem. Dryden does not seem fully aware of what has been well called 'the rich œconomy' of Virgil's expression, the exquisite structure and magic of his words, to attain which he has pushed the power of his language to the extreme verge of its structure, and transplanted those graces from its parent tongue which his native idiom did not supply; nor has Dryden kept in mind, that he who treads in the footsteps of the Roman poet must not deviate without error from the path that has been prescribed.[1] Hence the grace, the fineness of touch, the *tender bloom*, of Virgil's language is lost; and that finished and innate delicacy of taste which seemed instinctively to feel how to arrange the rich materials which it had collected, and which presents all that is appropriate and all that is select;[2]

To make the parallel hold tack,
Methinks there's little lacking;
One took his father pick-apack,
And t'other sent him packing.

[1] Dryden has not attended sufficiently to the *tenses* used by Virgil; while Pope is particularly defective in rendering the force of the *particles* used by Homer: indeed he seems almost entirely to have neglected them, to the great detriment of his translation.

[2] Virgil's great distinctive excellence and delicacy of sen-

which admits no figure into its composition that does not produce the intended effect; this cannot with justice be said to have been successfully attained by the translator. Almost every epic poem has its own peculiar level from which it rises, its own presiding tone of diction. The style of Virgil is elegant, ornamented, and graceful, giving him scope to make gentle descents on the wing, or occasionally to soar, without unnatural effort, into the higher regions of imaginative creation; while his language has such a transparent and crystal clearness, as to reflect with precision every image deposited within it. In awakening the finer sensibilities, in delineating the movement of the varying passions, in portraying the deep emotions of the heart, Dryden always failed, and such power here was imperiously demanded; yet we must allow that the general character of his poem is dignified, majestic, and harmonious, that it flows on 'with varied sweetness and with varied force,' that it possesses many passages of surprising vigour and energy, and examples of versification splendid and successful. Perhaps, as he himself suspected, he should have chosen an author of a different kind: perhaps, under any skill or talent, our language cannot reflect the exquisite beauties of the original. Certainly it must be said, that no one has yet eclipsed the fame which Dryden has so long enjoyed.[1]

timent and expression, joined to the most consummate technical skill, and just feeling in dressing out every circumstance or incident that he employs: but in the *appropriation* of those incidents and circumstances he is less happy. P. Knight on Taste, p. 312.

[1] Swift's ridicule of this translation, in his Tale of the Tub, is well known. Luke Milbourne was distinguished for

I must now enumerate some works of less importance and labour. Dryden translated Du Fresnoy's Art of Poetry, in about two months, and prefixed a preface, which cost him the labour of two mornings. He honored Purcell's memory with an ode, and wrote a Life of Lucian, at Moyles' solicitation.

In August, 1697, he was requested by the stewards of the musical festival, to write a second ode, to be sung at the celebration of St. Cecilia's day.[1] This was published under the title of Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music, in December, 1697. A story has long been current, which Joseph Warton first published, on the authority of Mr. Beringer, that this splendid ode was written and completed by Dryden in the course of a single night, but it came through too long and circuitous a channel not to have gained in its progress; for it appears that Mr. Beringer told it to Dr. Warton, while he had learned it from Gilbert West, who was indebted for his account to Pope, to whom it was communicated by Bolingbroke; a far better authority, that of Dryden's son, asserts that it took his father a fort-

his venomous and persevering malignity. Oldmixon and J. Parker volunteered in Dryden's defence.

[1] Johnson says, 'that in this ode some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes, a defect which he never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the metre might hinder him from perceiving.'—There is only one verse without a rhyme in the poem:

——— and sigh'd and *look'd*.

Dryden said to a young templar, (the father of Lord Chief Justice Morlay,) who complimented him on his ode,—'you are right, young gentleman, a nobler ode never *was* produced, nor ever *will*.' Malone's Dryden.

night to compose it. Malone was seldom caught by the wonderful, or surprised into belief, and he has satisfactorily examined the evidence of this fact; indeed Dryden, in a letter to his sons, mentions his being occupied on this ode in a way that proves it was by no means an extemporaneous effort. 'I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's feast, who, you know, is the patroness of music; this is troublesome, and no way beneficial.' Warton has observed, that it is difficult to express our admiration of the variety, the richness, the melody of its numbers, the force, beauty, and distinctness of its images, the succession of so many different passions and feelings, and the matchless perspicuity of its diction, no particle of it can be wished away, but the epigrammatic turn of the last four lines.[1]

This ode certainly possesses the great constituents of the lyric style, its bold abrupt transitions; its brilliant contrasts; its vividness and energy; its changes from exultation and triumph to the voice of pity, and the notes of woe. Nor is it wanting in those quick flashes of the brightest imagery passing as it were with electric rapidity down the chain of poetical connexion. Yet it has not the exquisite and finished language of Gray, nor his rich and select combinations of metaphorical diction.

Jeremy Collier, a nonjuring clergyman, made at this time an attack upon the stage, and singled out the most illustrious names of Congreve, Vanburgh, and Dryden, for the subject of his ani-

[1] Dryden received from the society £40. for this ode. Gray had forty guineas for his two odes. Dryden's ode was set to music, by Jer. Clarke, by Clayton, and, in 1736, by Handel.

madversions. The two former defended themselves, but Dryden's dramatic zeal had cooled, his interest on the stage had passed away, and he was not prepared in the cool reflection of age to defend those immoralities which in the carelessness and intemperance of youth he had lavished on a thoughtless and dissipated audience.

Malone says, that Dryden devoted nine entire days to the revision of his Virgil, and that a translation of Homer was among his literary projects. Dryden thought that Homer's fiery way of writing was more accordant to his genius. It has been reported, but on no sufficient authority, that he would have rendered his translation in blank verse. I should consider that Dryden knew his mastery over rhyme too well to desert it for a species of verse unpractised by him except in the drama, and unknown in its beauty and excellence to any poet of his age. At the same time, I think, that if we are ever to possess a translation that is to give us the spirit and manner of the original, that is to catch the key-note of the Chian harp, that is to please the poet and satisfy the scholar, it must be one that is free from the enfeebling bondage of rhyme.[1] The rhyming couplet, in my estimation, is sufficient alone to impair the venerable and simple dignity of the original, to modernise and alter its character. Whatever may be the excellencies of Pope's translation, the very

[1] Richardson says, that Dryden told Sir W. L. (Sir Wilfred Lawson?) 'that he would not have done his Virgil in rhyme, if he was to begin it again.' Scott's Dryden, p. 413. As I find myself opposed in my preference of blank verse in a translation of Homer, to the great authority of Mr. Payne Knight, I must refer to his Essay on Taste, p. 121. 395, for some observations on the subject.

essence of Homer's poetry has undergone a great change in passing through his hands: for he has altered the style of his author, raised artficially the level of his diction, lost the flexibility, the variety, the occasional familiarity of its manner throughout; he sets out in a higher region of expression, soars with a less flexible pinion, and with a more compulsory and laborious flight. Bentley's famous sarcasm on Spondanus had nearly as much truth as wit. Yet, I must confess, that nothing can more strongly display the genius of Pope than under such great disadvantages, that he has done so well. Possessing a very slight and superficial knowledge of Greek, and never having studied the peculiar language of his author, he undertook a translation of the most ancient and most difficult poet; educated in a very refined and polished age of literature, more distinguished for wit than force of genius, and most dissimilar in feeling and character to the genius of Homer, he has given a translation which has pleased many and pleased long.

In 1698 he began to remodel some of the fables of Chaucer, and translate some of Boccaccio's tales; the selection which he made from the Decameron (for he was on dangerous ground) did honour to the soundness and manliness of his taste. Having proceeded in his undertaking, he agreed, in 1699, to furnish his bookseller with ten thousand verses for the sum of £500. of which £250 was to be paid down. An Epistle to his cousin, John Dryden, of Chesterton,[1] was in-

[1] Malone is inclined to believe that Dryden received from his cousin, not *five* hundred pounds, but *one*; and a sum of the same amount from the Duchess of Ormond. *Life*, p. 327.

serted in the volume, for which, it is believed, a handsome pecuniary present was returned. The volume had a double dedication; one in prose to the Duke of Ormond, and another in verse to Mary, the second Duchess; she is reported to have rewarded the writer as became a person of rank and opulence. It is singular that a second edition of this work was not called for till thirteen years after the death of the author, though now the most popular of all his works; for the thoughts are natural and beautiful; the imagery richly carved with something of Arabesque magnificence; the narrative interesting and picturesque, and the stream of verse is poured along warbling in fine musical intonation, and with long melodious flow. The fables of Pope, compared to these, have a paler and fainter colour, possessing neither Dryden's vigour of imagination, nor his rich and brilliant plumage of poetical expression.[1]

About this time Vanburgh revived Fletcher's Comedy, entitled 'The Pilgrim,' for the actors at Drury Lane, and stipulated that Dryden should have the benefit of the third night's performance, in return for this prologue and epilogue,[2] and a secular masque introduced at the end of the piece.

[1] The faults in these fables are pointed out by an acute and ingenious critic,—'no false wit from the school of Cowley turns a baron bold into an epigrammatist; no Sigismunda delivers a lecture on republicanism, on being caught with her lover; no legend of a knight of Arthur is degraded, as in the Wife of Bath's tale, into a vehicle of modern satire; no action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, like that of Palamon and Arcite.' See Taylor's Surv. of German Poetry, ii. 327.

[2] Dryden possessed an undisputed superiority over all his contemporaries as a writer of prologues and epilogues; his assistance was accordingly sought by the authors of new plays, and by the players on remarkable occasions. There is

These small poems were written but three weeks before our author's death; and the play which they accompanied was the first in which that beautiful and accomplished actress, Mrs. Oldfield, displayed the extent of her dramatic powers. It is singular that Dryden's muse accompanied her earliest entrance into fame; and that the pencil of Pope drew the last features of her fading portrait, as she departed from life.

The days of our poet's existence were now fast drawing to a close. He had been for some years

in most of them much variety of fancy, pleasantry of satire, keenness of observation, and harmony and elegance of verse. The tone of superiority in which they are written has been remarked; and he rather lays down laws to his audience, than supplicates their favour; and throws the defects of his play, not on the want of genius in the writer, but on the imperfect taste of the audience; indeed, Granville, Lord Lansdowne, in his Essay on Unnatural Flights in Poetry, apologizes for Dryden having suffered his judgment to be swayed by a wild audience. In his Oxford Prologues a becoming deference and respect is shown to the taste and learning of the University. It must, however, be deplored, that in these productions his liveliness too often descends into coarse and licentious allusion; though it stops far short of the gross indecency that is to be found in Shadwell. The original editions, printed on single leaves, and sold at the door of the theatre, are very rare; they are coarser and more licentious than those which Dryden finally adopted. He appears to have set but little value on them; for he often transferred the same prologue from one play to another, or took an epilogue out of a former poem. The satire against the Dutch furnishes the greater part of the prologue and epilogue to Amboyna. The epilogue to Mithridates, King of Pontus, 1681, the first play acted at the Theatre Royal, is printed for the first time by Scott among Dryden's Poems, vol. x. 354. When Southerne offered Dryden for a prologue to his first play, 'The Loyal Brother,' the sum of five guineas, he refused it, saying, 'Not that I do so out of disrespect to you, young man, but the players have had my goods too cheap, in future I must have ten.' Malone thinks that the sum of three guineas and five should be substituted for five and ten.

harassed by attacks of gravel and gout. In December, 1699, the erysipelas appeared in his legs. In the April following, in consequence of neglecting an inflammation of his feet, a mortification ensued, of which he died after a short illness, at three o'clock, on Wednesday, the 1st of May, 1700, at his house in Gerard Street. [1]He behaved during his last moments with composure and resignation to the Divine will. He expressed, at his advanced period of life, no anxious wish to have existence prolonged; he took a tender and affectionate farewell of his afflicted friends; and he died in the profession of the Roman Catholic faith.

About thirty years after Dryden's death, in some memoirs of Congreve, published by a person under the fictitious name of Wilson (and who might have been Oldmixon), a most erroneous account of our poet's funeral was given, and generally received as true. The original fabricator of the falsehood was Mrs. Thomas, well known under the name of Corinna, which Dryden had bestowed on her. She gave this story to the world, with a perfect consciousness that the whole narrative was false. She was in the Fleet prison at the time, and it is supposed, supplied Curll with this singular imposition for some slight remuneration. This is the same person who surreptitiously procured Pope's letters to Cromwell, and sold them to Curll, without consent of either of the parties. The whole narrative must have

[1] Mr. Hobbes, an eminent surgeon, proposed to amputate the limb, but Dryden refused, saying, he was an old man, and had not long to live by the course of nature, and therefore did not care to part with one limb, to preserve an uncomfortable life upon the rest. Ward's London Spy, part xviii.

been founded on the slight foundation of a letter from Farquhar, and a description of the funeral by T. Brown. As, however, the real circumstances attending the burial of our poet are not without some singularity, I shall give them as they are faithfully recorded by Malone.

Dryden expired on Wednesday morning at three o'clock, the first of May. As he died of a gangrene, it was necessary that he should be buried without delay. Accordingly, two days after, his corpse, at the expense of Mr. Montagu[1] (afterwards Lord Halifax), was carried from his house in a private manner, to be interred probably in the churchyard of the neighbouring parish. The Earl of Dorset, Lord Jeffries, and others, either hearing of the circumstances, or perhaps meeting the funeral procession as it passed, thinking that so celebrated a poet should be buried with some greater marks of respect and admiration, prevailed on the friends of the deceased to consent that the body should be carried for embalment to the house of Mr. Russell, the undertaker: at the same time, they applied, through Dr. Garth, to the Censors of the college of physicians, to permit it to be deposited there, till it was conveyed to Westminster Abbey for interment. A subscription was raised to defray the expense.[2]

[1] Pope's bitter lines on Montagu are known to all.

Dryden alone, what wonder, came not nigh,
Dryden alone escap'd his judging eye;
Yet still the great have kindness in reserve,
He help'd to bury, whom he help'd to starve.

But the accusation is not quite correct. See Malone's Dryden, ii. 90.

[2] The undertaker's (Mr. Russell) bill for the funeral amounted to £45 17*s*. See Scott's edit. vol. xviii. p. 194.

The body having laid in state for ten days, on the 13th of May the funeral obsequies were performed. A Latin oration was recited by Garth[1] in the theatre of the college, *then the last ode of the third book of Horace was sung.* The procession, consisting of nearly fifty coaches, and attended with music, moved on to the abbey. The body of Dryden was deposited in the grave of Chaucer;[2] one of the prebendaries reading the service, and the choir of the cathedral attending.

Soon after the death of Dryden, H. Playford, (the well known publisher of music) printed a collection of Latin and English verses, under the title of 'Luctus Britannicus,' or the tears of the British Muses for the death of Mr. Dryden. Another collection, in a small volume, called, 'The Nine Muses, or Poems, written by nine several Ladies,' lamented Dryden's memory. It was generally expected that Mr. Montagu would have erected a monument in the abbey; but, seventeen years after the poet's death, Garth complained that he who had the power of conferring immortality by his pen, should himself want a monument to his fame.

[1] In a satirical poem called the Apparition, 1710, Garth's funeral eloquence is described.

John Dryden with his brethren of the bays,
His love to Garth, blaspheming Garth conveys,
And thanks him for his pagan funeral praise.

In Garth's Essay on Ovid's Metamorphoses is a eulogy on Dryden, p. 281. When Boileau heard of the honours paid to Dryden's remains, he pretended ignorance even of his name.

[2] In Cibber's (Shiel's) Life of Dryden (Lives, iii. p. 93) there is a copy of very indifferent Latin verses, signed John Phillips, 1700, æt. 14, which he says were thrown into the grave of Dryden, and which he printed for the first time.

In 1717, Congreve complimented Pelham, Duke of Newcastle, on his munificence, in having *given orders* for erecting a splendid monument to one who was an honor to his country. His grace received the praise, and reserved the money. At length, Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, roused, it is said, by some lines of Pope's intended to be inscribed on Rowe's tomb,[1] gave Kent an order to form a plain unexpensive design, and the bust of the poet was sculptured by Scheemaker.[2] The whole cost not much more than one hundred pounds, and was erected twenty years after the poet's decease.

Dryden had three sons by Lady Elizabeth,—Charles, John, and Erasmus-Henry, who are described by a lady to whom they were personally known, as fine, ingenious, and accomplished gentlemen. Charles was bred at Westminster school, chosen king's scholar in 1680, and elected to Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he was admitted a member in 1683. He published some Latin verses on different subjects: one called the Horti Arlingtoniani, may be found in the third volume of the Miscellanies. He translated the seventh satire of Juvenal, which appeared in his

[1] Thy reliques, Rowe, to this fair urn we trust,
And sacred place by Dryden's useful dust.
Beneath a *rude and nameless stone he lies,*
To which thy tomb shall guide inquiring eyes, &c.

[2] It appears from an entry in the chapter books at Westminster, that a *bust of inferior workmanship* kept its place on our author's tomb, for ten years, previous to Scheemaker being employed, who probably received for his bust twenty-five guineas. 'At a chapter held the 20th Nov. 1731, ordered, that her grace the Duchess of Buckinghamshire have leave to change the present bust of Mr. Dryden for a better.' In Hacket's Epitaphs is an epigram on putting up this monument. See vol. i. p. 110.

father's version in 1692. Afterwards he went to Italy as nuncio to Pope Innocent XII. and was appointed chamberlain to his household. He appears to have been a person of accomplishments, a musician, a poet, and tolerable scholar. He was a great favourite with his father, who, indeed, to all his children was a tender and affectionate parent. He returned to England in 1698, and after his father's death administered to his effects. He was drowned, while attempting to swim across the Thames, near Datchet, and buried at Windsor, August, 1704. Concerning this son, there are some curious astrological predictions by Dryden, published by Mrs. Thomas in Congreve's life, the incongruities of which Malone, as usual, has detected.

John, the second son, was born in 1667--8, was admitted a king's scholar at Westminster, where he continued till 1685, when he was elected to Oxford. He was not matriculated a member of the university, having adopted, it is supposed, the religious opinions of his father, but placed under the private tuition of the famous Obadiah Walker, master of university, who was a papist; probably he went to Rome with his elder brother in 1692, when twenty-four years old. He became an officer in the pope's household, officiating as his brother's deputy. Previous to his leaving England he translated the fourteenth satire of Juvenal, and while at Rome wrote a comedy, entitled, ' The Husband his own Cuckold,' which was acted in Lincoln's Inn Fields 1696, to which his father contributed a prologue, and Congreve an epilogue. He made a tour through Sicily and Malta, which was published : and after his return to Rome in January, 1701, he died of a fever.

Erasmus Henry, the third son, was born May, 1669, admitted a scholar of the charter house, on the nomination of Charles II. in 1682. He was elected to the university, but on account of his religious opinions did not become a member of either. He also went to Rome, was a captain in the Pope's guards, and probably remained there till after the death of his elder brother. By the death of Sir John Dryden, in 1720, the title of baronet, but without the estate, devolved on him.

He resided with his kinsman, Edward, at Canons-Ashby, for the greater part of the time; it is supposed, in a state of mental imbecility; a disease perhaps derived from his mother. He enjoyed the title only six weeks, and died in the forty-second year of his age, at the family mansion, and was buried at Canons-Ashby, 4th December, 1710; by his death the title was transferred to his uncle Erasmus.

Of the Lady Elizabeth, for so she was always called, little that is pleasant or satisfactory remains to be told. In the latter part of Dryden's life, during his various excursions in the country, she never accompanied him: nor was she ever visited by his relations, except in a formal and ceremonious manner. No authentic account has been transmitted of her person,[1] nor has any portrait of her been discovered. I am afraid that

[1] A letter from Lady Elizabeth to her son at Rome is preserved, as remarkable for the elegance of the style, as the correctness of the orthography. She says,—'your father is much at woon as to his health, and his defnese is not wosce, but much as he was when he was heare; give me a true account how my deare sonn Charlles is head dus.'—Can this be the lady who had formerly held captive in her chains the gallant Earl of Chesterfield?

her personal attractions were not superior to her mental endowments; that her temper was wayward, and that the purity of her character was sullied by some early indiscretions.

Soon after Dryden's death she became insane, and was confined under the care of a female attendant, to whom her dower from his paternal estates of Blakesley was regularly paid for her use. In this condition, she continued for several years, and died in June or July, 1714, probably in the seventy-ninth year of her age. Though we have no original whole length portrait of Dryden,[1] yet Malone considers that there are few English poets of whose external appearance more particulars are recorded. He was certainly a short, fat, florid man, 'corpore quadrato,' as Lord Hailes observed: a description which Æn. Sylvius ap-

[1] In the preface to 'the Reasons for Mr. Bayes changing his Religion,' considered in a dialogue between Crites, Eugenius, and Mr. Bayes, 1688, 4to., is a passage designed to be a portrait of Dryden. I can make a pretty shift to read without spectacles, wear my own hair, which is somewhat inclining to red, have a large mole on my left cheek, am mightily troubled with corns, and what is peculiar to my constitution after half a dozen bottles of claret, which I generally carry home every night from the tavern, I never fail of a stool or two next morning, besides I used to smoke a pipe every day after dinner, and afterwards steal a nap for an hour or two, in the old wicker chair near the oven; take gentle purgatives, spring and fall, and it has been my custom any time these sixteen years, as all the parish can testify, to ride in Gambadoes. Nay, to win the heart of him for ever, I invite him here before the courteous reader, (provided he will before hand promise not to debauch my wife), when he shall have sugar to his roast beef, and vinegar to his butter; and lastly, to make him amends for the tediousness of his journey, a parcel of relics to carry home with him, which I believe can scarce be matched in the whole Christian world, &c.

plied to James I. of Scotland. He wore his hair in large quantities, and it inclined to gray even before his misfortunes, a circumstance which Lord Hailes said he learned from a portrait of Dryden, painted by Kneller. In Riley's portrait, 1683, he wears a very large wig, so also in that done by Closterman, at a later period. By Tom Brown he is called 'Little Bayes,' and by Lord Rochester he was nicknamed 'Poet Squab.' Of his appearance I have nothing more to remark, than in an epigram of Elsum's,[1] he is described as having 'a sleepy eye,' and not a countenance of sweet favour; and that a large mole on his right cheek is conspicuous in all his portraits.[2] Malone thinks that his pecuniary difficulties and distress have been overrated; he considers that his income was more than £500 a year,[3] for a considerable period, a sum he says equal to £1800 at this day; but that in August, 1689, his distress truly began:[4] for being deprived of both his places, his

[1] Epigrams on the paintings of the most eminent masters, by I. E. (John Elsum) 8vo. 1700. Ep. clxiv.

A sleepy eye he shows, and no sweet feature,
Yet was indeed a favourite with nature, &c.

[2] On Dryden's portraits, see Malone's Life, p. 432—6. Perhaps the *mole* on his cheek was the cause of his not taking orders: for Wood says, that Laud would not ordain Shirley the poet, on account of a *mole on his left cheek*.—Mole ruit sua.—

[3] About the year 1670, when Dryden possessed both his places, and his share of the theatre, Scott considers his income to have been £600, or to £700 annually, but his pension was not regularly paid, the burning of the theatre injured his income from that quarter, and *Lady Elizabeth was not very economical*. Life, p. 117.

[4] In one of his dedications of Virgil, to Lord Clifford, Dryden says, 'What I now offer to your lordship is the wretched remainder of a sickly age, worn out with study,

certain revenue was reduced to £120 a year, with such contingent accessions as might arise from his literary exertions, or the affectionate contribution of his friends.

The account which I have now given of Dryden would be left imperfect, were I not to conclude with inserting the delightful character of him that has been so minutely sketched by the affectionate and grateful hand of Congreve, who, during the last ten years of his life had lived in close habits of intimacy with him.[1]

'— Mr. Dryden had personal qualities to challenge both love and esteem for all who was truly acquainted with him. He was of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, easily forgiving injuries, and capable of a prompt and sincere reconciliation with those who had offended

and *oppressed by fortune*, without other support than the constancy and patience of a christian.' In the letters of Philip, second Earl of Chesterfield, is one from Dryden, offering the dedication of the Georgics to his patronage, and saying, 'From the first hour since I have had the happiness of being known to your lordship, I have always preferred you in my poor *esteem to any other nobleman, and that in all respects*, and you may please to believe me as an honest man, that I have not the least consideration of profit in this address.' A second letter follows, in which he thanks the earl, for the *noble present* which he received, he says, by the *largeness of your* present, I must conclude, that you considered who gave, not who was to receive. See Lord Chesterfield's Letters, p. 378. 381.

[1] See Congreve's Dedication of Dryden's Dramatic Works to the Duke of Newcastle. Congreve says—'In some very elegant, though very partial verses, which Dryden did me the honour to write to me, he recommended it to me—to be kind to his remains. I was then, and have been ever since, most sensibly touched with that expression; and the more so, because I could not find in myself the means of satisfying the passion which I felt in me to do something answerable to an

him. Such a temperament is the only solid foundation of all moral virtues and sociable endowments. His friendship, when he professed it, went much beyond his professions, though his hereditary income was little more than a bare competency. As his reading had been extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of every thing that he read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than communicative of it, but then his communication of it was by no means pedantic, or imposed upon the conversation: but just such, and went so far as by the natural turn of the discourse in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was extremely ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer, who thought fit to consult him,[1] and felt as ready and patient to admit of the reprehension of

injunction laid upon me in so pathetic and so amiable a manner.' The lines are—

> Already I am worn with cares and age,
> And just abandoning th' ungrateful stage,
> Unprofitably kept at heaven's expense,
> I live a rent-charge on his providence.
> But you, whom every muse and grace adorn,
> Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
> Be kind to my remains; and O! defend,
> Against your judgment, your departed friend.
> Let not th' insulting foe my fame pursue,
> But shade those laurels which descend to you;
> And take for tribute what these lines express,
> You merit more, nor could my love do less.
>
> Ep. to Mr. Congreve.

[1] When Addison was a student at Oxford, he sent up his play to his friend Dryden, as a proper person to recommend it to the theatre, who returned it with very great commendations; but with his opinion, that on the stage it could not meet with its deserved success! but though the performance was denied the theatre, it brought its author on the public stage of life.—Young on Orig. composition, p. 130.

others in respect of his own oversight or mistakes. He was of very easy, I may say, of very pleasing access, but somewhat slow, and as it were diffident in his advances to others. He had something in his nature that abhorred intrusion into any society whatever: indeed, it is to be regretted that he was rather blameable in the other extreme; for by that means he was personally less known, and consequently his character will become liable to misapprehension and misrepresentation. To the best of my knowledge and observation, he was, of all men that ever I knew, one of the most modest and the most easily to be discountenanced in his approaches either to his superiors or his equals.

As to Mr. Dryden's writings, I shall not take upon me to speak of them; for to say little of them, would not be to do them right, and to say all that I ought to say, would be to be very voluminous. But I may venture to say in general terms, that no man hath written in our language so much and so various matter, and in so various manners, so well. Another thing, I may say, was very peculiar to him, which is, that his parts did not decline with his years, but that he was an improving writer to his last, even to near seventy years of age; improving even in fire and imagination as well as in judgment, witness his Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, and his Fables, his last performances. He was equally excellent in verse and prose.[1]

[1] The English tongue, as it stands at present, is greatly his (Dryden's) debtor. He first gave it regular harmony and discovered its latent powers. It was his pen that formed the Congreves, the Priors, and the Addisons, who succeeded him; and had it not been for Dryden we never should have known a Pope, at least in the meridian lustre he now displays. But Dryden's excellencies as a writer were not confined to poetry alone. There is in his prose writings an ease and elegance

His prose had all the clearness imaginable, together with all the nobleness of expression, all the graces and ornaments proper and peculiar to it, without deviating into the language or diction of poetry. I make this observation only to distinguish his style from that of many poetical writers, who meaning to write harmoniously in prose, do in truth often write mere blank verse.

His versification and his numbers he could learn of nobody; for he first possessed those talents in perfection in our tongue, and they who have best succeeded in them, since his time, have been indebted to his example; and the more they have been able to imitate him, the better they have succeeded.

As his style in prose is always specifically different from his style in poetry; so on the other hand, in his poems, his diction is, whenever his subject requires it, so sublime and so truly poetical, that its essence, like that of pure gold, cannot be destroyed. Take his verses and divest them of their rhymes, disjoint them in their numbers, transpose their expressions, make what arrangement and disposition you please of his words, yet shall there eternally be poetry, and something which will be found incapable of being resolved into absolute prose, an incontestible characteristic of a truly poetical genius.

I will say but one word more in general of his

that have never yet been so well united in works of taste or criticism.—Goldsmith's Bee, p. 288. Dryden's versification (says Armstrong, Essays, p. 162) I take to be the most musical that has yet appeared in rhyme: round, sweet, pompous, spirited, and various, it flows with such a happy volubility, such an animated and masterly negligence, as I am afraid will not soon be excelled. From the fineness of his ear his prose, too, is perhaps the sweetest, the most mellow and sonorous, that the English language has yet produced.

writings, which is, that what he has done in any one species, or distinct kind, would have been sufficient to have acquired him a great name. If he had written nothing but his prefaces, or nothing but his songs, or his prologues, each of them would have entitled him to the preference and distinction of excelling in his kind.

To this interesting eulogy of Congreve, in which the partiality of friendship may have a little heightened the opinion he has delivered, I shall add the judgment of a writer himself possessing very considerable powers, and an original manner of thinking and expression.

'Dryden, says Young, destitute of Shakespeare's genius, had almost as much learning as Jonson,[1] and for the buskin quite as little taste. He was a stranger to the pathos, and by numbers, expression, sentiment, and every other dramatic cheat, strove to make amends for it, as if a saint could make amends for the want of conscience, a soldier for the want of valour, or a vestal of modesty. The noble nature of tragedy disclaims an equivalent, like virtue, it demands the heart, and Dryden had none to give. Let epic poets think; the tragedian's point is rather to feel; such distant things are a tragedian and a poet, that the latter indulged, destroys the former. Look on Barnwell and Essex, and see how as to these dis-

[1] This is certainly an incorrect assertion; Jonson's learning was profound and extensive; Dryden's was confined and very deficient in exactness: he is sometimes guilty of errors in quantity, as in Æn. vi.

'Then Laodamia with Evadne moves.'

Dryden possessed a large extent of knowledge, and he had thought much on subjects connected with poetry; but deep learning assuredly cannot be claimed by him.

tant characters Dryden excels and is excelled. But the strongest demonstration of his no taste for the buskin are his tragedies fringed with rhyme, which in epic poetry is a sore disease, in the tragic absolute death. To Dryden's enormity Pope's was a light offence. As lacemen are foes to mourning, these two authors, rich in rhyme, were no great friends to those solemn ornaments, which the noble nature of their works required. . . . . Dryden had a great but a general capacity, and as for a general genius, there is no such thing in nature. A genius implies the rays of the mind concentered and determined to some particular point, when they are scattered widely, they act feebly, and strike not with sufficient force to fire or dissolve the heat. As what comes from the writer's heart reaches ours, so what comes from his head sets our brains at work, and our hearts at ease. It makes a circle of thoughtful creations, not of distressed patents; and a passive audience is what tragedy requires. Applause is not to be given but extorted, and the silent lapse of a single tear does the writer more honour than the rattling thunder of a thousand hands. Applauding hands and dry eyes (which during Dryden's theatrical reign often met), are a satire on the writer's talent and the spectator's taste. But Dryden had his glory, though not of the stage. What an inimitable original is his ode? a small one indeed, but of the first lustre, and without a flaw, and amid the brightest boasts of antiquity it may find a foil.'

It is only necessary to add, that whatever difference of opinion may exist in the estimation formed of Dryden's genius; however some may consider that, even in the manhood and ma-

turity of his taste, he was too fond of swelling sentiments and poetical rant; while others lament the absence of that simple pathos, and those touches of nature which speak directly to the heart; or look in vain for that high tone of feeling, those exalted views, and that virtuous sensibility which have cast such a moral dignity over the pages of Pope; yet, besides other great poetical qualities, the highest praise of style and language must be universally conceded to him. No English poet, perhaps no English writer, has attained, as regards expression, such undisputed excellence. He may be considered as the connecting link between the writers of the Commonwealth, Clarendon and Milton; and those who introduced an easier and less artificial manner—Addison and Swift. I think that it may not unjustly be affirmed, that he was the first[1] who presented an example of a style, polished, elegant, and copious. This was effected, not by the importation of foreign words, or learned constructions, but by calling out the native strength of the language, recovering its lost idioms, recalling its forgotten beauties, and producing the strongest effects by common and familiar expressions. His prose style has the same kind of excellence as his poetical; harmonious without effort, familiar without meanness, flowing on with richness of sound, variety of cadence, majesty and flexibility of movement, and with a copious and expanded eloquence.

Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

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[1] 'Clarendon himself is often liable to exception, both in sentiment and style; and our language indeed was not entirely polished till the present century.' See Sir W. Jones's Pref. to Nadir Shah.

A writer[1] who has deeply studied the principles and structure of our language, confesses that Dryden's *practical* knowledge of the English language was beyond all others exquisite and wonderful. With the polished and perhaps fastidious taste which the late Mr. Fox possessed, with his dislike of every thing pedantic, or inflated, with his love of simplicity of expression and purity of style, with the nicety of his choice in the selection of words, and forms of speech; we can hardly wonder at the decision which he adopted of admitting no word into his history, for which he had not the authority of Dryden.[2] He was anxious to lend his high influence in restoring that pure and idiomatic style which he thought had been much corrupted by the example of some eminent writers; and perhaps unjustly estimated in the opinion of the public; but with deference to a judgment so carefully formed, and so strongly supported, I must consider his decision to have been too narrow and exclusive, nor do I think it wise to confine our models of imitation to the authority of any single writer. Style and language must be always influenced by the subject. Perhaps instances might be found in Mr. Fox's own history which would make us hesitate in adopting his opinion; and ask whether Dryden's familiar and homely expressions appear in proper *keeping* with the subjects of the historic narrative. The prose works of Dryden consist of critical disquisitions, prefatory addresses, letters and casual treatises, which require the *character*

[1] See Horne Tooke's Diversions of Purley, vol. ii. p 400. 4to.

[2] See Lord Holland's preface to Fox's History, p. xli.

of their style, to differ from that of history; but while I fully acknowledge their exquisite beauties, and varied excellencies, I still think it would have been more judicious in Mr. Fox to have extended his approbation to many other celebrated writers as well as to Dryden.[1] I would rather subscribe to the more *modified* opinion of Gray, who, when Dr. Beattie expressed himself with less admiration of Dryden than Gray thought his due, told him, that if there were any excellence in his own numbers he had learnt it wholly from that great poet, and pressed him with great earnestness to study him, as his choice of words and phrases was singularly happy and harmonious. Remember Dryden, he added, and be blind to all his faults.[2]

[1] Since writing the above, I was much pleased to observe my opinion supported by the very high authority of Dr. Parr, who says—The general character of Mr. Fox's style is purely English; and as to the rejection of a word for which he had not the authority of Dryden, it is a fancy which seems to me not less unwise than the fastidiousness of the Ciceronian sect. Philop. Varvicensis, p. 589.

[2] See Beattie's Essay on Poetry and Music, 4to, p. 360. Mason in his life of Whitehead, p. 17. says that Gray, who admired Dryden almost beyond bounds, used to say of a very juvenile poem of his in Tonson's Miscellany, written on the death of Lord Hastings, that it gave not so much as the slightest promise of his future excellence, and seemed to indicate a bad natural ear for versification. See also Mason's works, vol. i. p. 451.

APPENDIX.

LIST *of some unusual poetical and obsolete* WORDS *and* PHRASES *(used by Dryden in his various poems) formed by the Editor many years since, during the perusal of his works, and written in the fly-leaves of the volume.*

To his Sacred Majesty, l. 57.
He that brought peace, all discord could *atone*.
l. 102. To taste the *fraicheur* of the purer air.

Annus Mirabilis.
st. 86. Straight flies at check, and *clips* it down the wind.
254. And half *unready* with their bodies come.

Absalom and Achitophel.
Part i. No king could govern, *nor no* God could please.
Do. Naked of friends,—unblamed of life.

The Medal.
And with thy *stum* ferment their fainting cause.

Religio Laici.
That vice triúmphs, and virtue suffers here.
So in Eleonora.

Veni Creator.
Plenteous of grace, descend from high.

Hind and Panther.
1. Why choose we then like *hilanders* to creep.
2. When virtue *spooms* before a prosperous gale.
3. No neighbouring *dorp*, no lodging to be found,
But *bleaky* plains and bare unhospitable ground.
4. Defraud succession, and *disheir* the crown.

Epistles.
Foreslowed her passage to behold her form.

Epilogue to the Man of Mode.
Which with a *shog* casts all the hair before.

Palamon and Arcite.
Hopes the hunted bear.
Do. And other shields of *pruce*.
Do. Rich of three souls.

Cock and Fox.

Tardy of aid.

Flower and Leaf.

The sacred recéptacle of the wood.
The fainty knights were scorch'd.

Cymon and Iphigenia.

The *slav'ring cudden* propp'd upon his staff.

The name of fool confirm'd and *bishopp'd* by the fair.

Meleager and Atalanta.

And *ranch'd* his hips with one continued wound.

Acis, Polyphemus, &c.

Now in the crystal stream he looks, to try
His *simagres*.

Pythag. Philos.

And bees their honey *redolent* of spring.

Canace to Macareus.

And *deafs* his stormy subjects with his cries.

Ovid's Art of Love.

The theatres are *berries* for the fair.

Although the word 'berry,' as a fruit, was used formerly more than now, as preserved in the compounds, mul-berry, straw-berry, &c.; I question if Dryden did not use berries in this place for 'groves.' As bees to hives, as ants to molehills, so the fair repair to theatres as to groves. Sir J. Harrington has, 'upon the western side, a grove, or *berie*,' and in this sense, shrub-berie.

Do. With daily lies she *dribs* thee into cost.

Do. What Deidamia did in days of yore, (the quantity wrong.)

Virgil.

Past ix. 17. A *plump* of trembling fowl.
Georg. i. 651. A sweepy sway.
ii. 621. Though *shent* their leaves.
ii. 283. Filled the pail with *beestings* of the cow.
634. To *roofy* houses they repair.
683. They *oint* their naked limbs.
iv. 577. The *southing* sun inflames the day.
Æn. ii. 164. Once more *atone* the main.
iv. 779. Himself I *refuged*.
v. 33. The *southing* of the stars.
113. His *hugy* bulk.
256. Be last, the *lags* of all the race.
777. This game, these cárousals.
882. The youths to *sportal* arms he led.

Æn. vi. 363. Which *ointed* thus, the raging flame devours.
vii. 130. *Deafs* his ears.
258. Girt in his *gabin* gown.
viii. 108. And *firm* the gracious promise thou hast made.
967. Scythians expert in the dart and bow.
ix. 1094. His crest is *rash'd* away, his ample shield
Is *falsified*, and round with javelins fill'd.
See Dryden's Note.
xii. 1258. And knew the ill omen by her screaming cry,
And stridour of her wing.

Juvenal's Satires.
iii. 373. And give thy frugal friends a *Pythagórean* treat.
vi. 696. With mumbled prayers *attones* the deity.
Flourish the sword, and at the *flastron* push.

Persius's Satires.
iv. 73. ——————— for saving *charges*
Himself slic'd onion eats, and tipples *verjuice*.

Ovid's Met.
Huge *cantlets* of his buckler strew the ground.

Lucretius, book i.
Or beautiful or *lovesome* can appear.

Homer, Translation of.
Supreme of Augurs—blind of the future—forlorn of human aid—impotent of tongue—a form of expression borrowed by Dryden from the Latin idiom, and transplanted by him into our tongue; he was evidently very partial to it, having used it on more occasions than I have remarked, and generally with grace and beauty. Collins has been aware of its elegance, and has admitted it into his ornamented style of poetry.
Or call for vengeance from the *bowyer* king.
With hymns and pæans to the *bowyer* king.
This expression is not correct, bowyer is not an 'archer,' in which sense it is used here, but a 'bow maker,' as 'fletcher' is a maker of arrows.

Marriage à la Mode.
Act iv. I am so *chagrin* to-day.

Assignation.
Act i. You are eager and *baiting* to be gone.
ii. With guitars, dark lanterns, and *rondaches*.
iv. Some of these *harlotry* nuns.
iv. Let a sufficient beating *atone* the difference.

This active form of the verb 'atone' occurs so often, as not to make it necessary to particularize the passages. It was used in this manner by the old writers. Its etymology is 'at-one,' i. e. let a beating place the difference at one, or make it up. See the commentators on Shakespeare. In Don Sebastian, 'Then prayers are vain as curses—much *at one* in a slave's mouth.' I am not aware of its being thus actively used much after Dryden's time, except that it is to be met with in Pope's Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady:

What can atone, oh! ever injur'd Slade,
Thy fate unpitied, and thy rites unpaid?

Amboyna.

Act i. I go to fill a *brendice* to my noble captain's health.

There is a curious disquisition on this word 'Brendice' in Voyage en Sicile, et dans la Grande Grèce adressé à Mons. Winckelman, traduit de l'Allemand à Lausanne, 1733, 12mo. p. 230. He thinks it signified 'drinking to one's health,' from the frequent departures of the Romans for Greece, at Brundusium; and from their friend accompanying them there, and drinking to their prosperous voyage. He mentions other explanations: 1. The good wine of Brundusium. 2. The custom of drinking. 3. A society formed there, that made impromptu verses on every glass of wine. The translator of the work has added a note, saying that it comes from the German 'bring dies.' Je vous la porte, of the French, and 'Tibi propino' of the Latins. 'Brinde,' vieux mot François, qui est dit autrefois d'un verre de vin bu à la santé de quel'qu'un, et *porté* à un autre, &c.

It is used a second time in the play,

Now each man his *brindice*, and then to the fight.

Troilus and Cressida.

Act ii. sc. 2. His arms tied down, his feet *sprunting*.

Albion and Albanius.

Act i. And Jove has *firm'd* it with an awful nod.

Sir M. Marall.

Act i. Death is a bug-word.
iii. 'Tis key-cold.
iii. What a *goodier* is the matter.
See Nares's Glossary.

Tyr. Love.

Act iv. Some *astral* forms.

Don Sebastian.

Act v. sc. 1. That's your father's hand *firm'd* with his signet.

Cleomenes.

Act iii. sc. 1. Hear this, and *firm* it with some happy omen.

Amphitryon,

Act i. sc. 2. Oh! the malicious *Hilding!*

ii. sc. 1. It *wafteth* this way. This verb is used neutrally in Thomson's Spring.

Love triumphant.

Act ii. I think I can with ease *revolt* the troops.

'His hand a *vare* of justice did uphold.'

Derrick's ed. reads, 'vase,' but 'vare' is the true reading, Howell's Letters, p. 161, ed. 1728. 'He is wonderful obedient to government, for the proudest Don of Spain, when he is prancing upon his ginet in the streets, if an alguazil show him his *vare*, that is, a little white staff he carrieth as a badge of his office, my Don will presently off his horse, and yield himself his prisoner.' 'Vara' is Spanish for a wand. See J. Warton's ed. i. p. 246.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Page cxx of the Life.

By the agreement, dated June 15, 1694, Dryden was to receive for the translation of Virgil the sum of £200, at stated intervals, and one hundred copies of the work upon large paper, which Tonson was to sell for him at £5. 5*s.* each to Subscribers; Dryden was also to have any additional number of copies, on paying the difference between the price of the small and the large paper. Tonson paid all expenses, and had only the proceeds of the small paper copies. Dryden also reserved to himself the power of cancelling the agreement, on the repayment of any sums he had received of Tonson. Congreve was one of the witnesses to the instrument.

About eleven years ago, a tragedy, called *Œdipus*, was acted at the minor theatre in Tottenham Court Road. It was formed on the drama of Dryden and Lee, intermixed with some passages from Maurice's translation of Œdipus Tyrannus. The part of Jocasta was played by Mrs. Glover. Œdipus came on the stage throned in a triumphal car, drawn by real horses. The piece was performed many nights with success.

The Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles was acted at Stanmore, by the scholars of Dr. Parr, in the original Greek, before Dr. Samuel Johnson, and a great body of foreign and British literati, in the year 1776: this I learn from Maurice's preface to his translation of the play in question

UPON THE DEATH OF LORD HASTINGS.*

Must noble Hastings immaturely die,
The honour of his ancient family,
Beauty and learning thus together meet,
To bring a winding for a wedding sheet?
Must virtue prove death's harbinger? must she,
With him expiring, feel mortality?
Is death, sin's wages, grace's now? shall art
Make us more learned, only to depart?
If merit be disease; if virtue death;
To be good, not to be; who'd then bequeath
Himself to discipline? who'd not esteem
Labour a crime? study self-murder deem?
Our noble youth now have pretence to be
Dunces securely, ignorant healthfully.
Rare linguist, whose worth speaks itself, whose [praise,
Though not his own, all tongues besides do raise:
Than whom great Alexander may seem less:
Who conquer'd men, but not their languages.

* Son of Ferdinand, Earl of Huntingdon: he died before his father in 1649, being then in his twentieth year, and on the day preceding that which had been appointed for the celebration of his marriage.

In his mouth nations spake; his tongue might be
Interpreter to Greece, France, Italy.
His native soil was the four parts o' the earth;
All Europe was too narrow for his birth.
A young apostle; and with reverence may
I speak 't, inspir'd with gift of tongues, as they.
Nature gave him, a child, what men in vain
Oft strive, by art though further'd, to obtain.
His body was an orb, his sublime soul
Did move on virtue's and on learning's pole:
Whose regular motions better to our view,
Than Archimedes' sphere, the heavens did show.
Graces and virtues, languages and arts,
Beauty and learning, fill'd up all the parts.
Heaven's gifts, which do like falling stars appear
Scatter'd in others; all, as in their sphere,
Were fix'd, conglobate in his soul; and thence
Shone through his body, with sweet influence;
Letting their glories so on each limb fall,
The whole frame render'd was celestial.
Come, learned Ptolemy, and trial make,
If thou this hero's altitude canst take:
But that transcends thy skill; thrice happy all,
Could we but prove thus astronomical.
Liv'd Tycho now, struck with this ray, which shone
More bright i' the morn', than others beam at noon,
He'd take his astrolabe, and seek out here

[35] *Were fix'd, conglobate in his soul*] This word is used in the second book of Lucretius, ver. 153, in the same sense.

'Sed complexa meant inter se conque globata.'

John Warton.

What new star 'twas did gild our hemisphere.
Replenish'd then with such rare gifts as these,
Where was room left for such a foul disease?
The nation's sin hath drawn that veil, which shrouds
Our day-spring in so sad benighting clouds.
Heaven would no longer trust its pledge; but thus
Recall'd it; rapt its Ganymede from us.
Was there no milder way but the small-pox,
The very filthiness of Pandora's box?
So many spots, like næves on Venus' soil,
One jewel set off with so many a foil;
Blisters with pride swell'd, which through's flesh did sprout
Like rose-buds, stuck i' the lily skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit:
Which, rebel like, with its own lord at strife,
Thus made an insurrection 'gainst his life.
Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,
The cabinet of a richer soul within?
No comet need foretell his change drew on,
Whose corpse might seem a constellation.
O! had he died of old, how great a strife [life?
Had been, who from his death should draw their
Who should, by one rich draught, become whate'er
Seneca, Cato, Numa, Cæsar, were?
Learn'd, virtuous, pious, great; and have by this
A universal metempsychosis.
Must all these aged sires in one funeral
Expire? all die in one so young, so small?

Who, had he liv'd his life out, his great fame
Had swoll'n 'bove any Greek or Roman name.
But hasty winter, with one blast, hath brought
The hopes of autumn, summer, spring, to nought.
Thus fades the oak i' the sprig, i' the blade the corn;
Thus without young, this Phœnix dies, new born.
Must then old three-legg'd grey-beards with their
gout,
Catarrhs, rheums, aches, live three ages out?
Time's offals, only fit for the hospital!
Or to hang antiquaries' rooms withal!
Must drunkards, lechers, spent with sinning, live
With such helps as broths, possets, physic give?
None live, but such as should die? shall we meet
With none but ghostly fathers in the street?
Grief makes me rail: sorrow will force its way;
And show'rs of tears tempestuous sighs best lay.
The tongue may fail; but overflowing eyes
Will weep out lasting streams of elegies.
  But thou, O virgin-widow, left alone,
Now thy belov'd, heaven-ravish'd spouse is gone,
Whose skilful sire in vain strove to apply
Med'cines, when thy balm was no remedy,
With greater than Platonic love, O wed
His soul, though not his body, to thy bed:
Let that make thee a mother; bring thou forth
The ideas of his virtue, knowledge, worth;
Transcribe the original in new copies; give
Hastings o' the better part: so shall he live
In's nobler half; and the great grandsire be

Of an heroic divine progeny:
An issue, which to eternity shall last,
Yet but the irradiations which he cast.
Erect no mausoleums: for his best
Monument is his spouse's marble breast.*

TO HIS FRIEND JOHN HODDESDON,

ON HIS DIVINE EPIGRAMS.†

Thou hast inspir'd me with thy soul, and I
Who ne'er before could ken of poetry,
Am grown so good proficient, I can lend
A line in commendation of my friend.
Yet 'tis but of the second hand; if ought
There be in this, 'tis from thy fancy brought.
Good thief, who dar'st, Prometheus-like, aspire,
And fill thy poems with celestial fire:

* The verses on Lord Hastings in the 'Lachrymæ Musarum,' are subscribed 'Johannes Dryden. Scholæ Westm. alumnus.'—It appears from a note of the editor's, that they were sent at a late period in the year (1649), after a great part of the book was printed off, and when it was just ready for publication. *Malone.*

† Mr. Hoddesdon's poetical effusions were published in 8vo. 1650, under the title of 'Sion and Parnassus, or Epigrams on several texts of the Old and New Testament.' To this book is prefixed the author's engraved portrait, 'Ætat. 18.' by which it appears that he and Dryden were nearly of the same age. *M.*

Enliven'd by these sparks divine, their rays
Add a bright lustre to thy crown of bays.
Young eaglet, who thy nest thus soon forsook,
So lofty and divine a course hast took
As all admire, before the down begin
To peep, as yet, upon thy smoother chin;
And, making heaven thy aim, hast had the grace
To look the sun of righteousness i' th' face.
What may we hope, if thou goest on thus fast,
Scriptures at first; enthusiasms at last!
Thou hast commenc'd, betimes, a saint, go on,
Mingling diviner streams with Helicon.
That they who view what Epigrams here be,
May learn to make like, in just praise of thee.
Reader, I've done, nor longer will withhold
Thy greedy eyes; looking on this pure gold
Thou'lt know adult'rate copper, which, like this,
Will only serve to be a foil to his.

HEROIC STANZAS ON THE DEATH OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

WRITTEN AFTER HIS FUNERAL.

I.

And now 'tis time; for their officious haste,
Who would before have borne him to the sky,
Like eager Romans, ere all rites were past,
Did let too soon the sacred eagle fly.

Though our best notes are treason to his fame,
Join'd with the loud applause of public voice;
Since heaven, what praise we offer to his name,
Hath render'd too authentic by its choice.

Though in his praise no arts can liberal be,
Since they, whose muses have the highest flown,
Add not to his immortal memory,
But do an act of friendship to their own.

Yet 'tis our duty, and our interest too,
Such monuments as we can build to raise;
Lest all the world prevent what we should do,
And claim a title in him by their praise.

How shall I then begin, or where conclude,
To draw a fame so truly circular?
For in a round what order can be show'd,
Where all the parts so equal perfect are?

His grandeur he deriv'd from heaven alone;
For he was great, ere fortune made him so:
And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.

No borrow'd bays his temples did adorn,
But to our crown he did fresh jewels bring;
Nor was his virtue poison'd soon as born,
With the too early thoughts of being king.

Fortune (that easy mistress to the young,
But to her ancient servants coy and hard)

Him at that age her favourites rank'd among,
When she her best-lov'd Pompey did discard.

He, private, mark'd the fault of others sway,
And set as sea-marks for himself to shun:
Not like rash monarchs, who their youth betray
By acts their age too late would wish undone.

And yet dominion was not his design;
We owe that blessing, not to him, but heaven,
Which to fair acts unsought rewards did join;
Rewards, that less to him than us were given.

Our former chiefs, like sticklers of the war,
First sought to inflame the parties, then to poise:
The quarrel lov'd, but did the cause abhor;
And did not strike to hurt, but make a noise.

War, our consumption, was their gainful trade:
We inward bled, whilst they prolong'd our pain;
He fought to end our fighting, and essay'd
To staunch the blood by breathing of the vein.

[36] *By acts their age too late would wish undone*] Infectum volet esse, dolor quod suaserit et mens. Hor. I. Ep. ii. l. 60. *J. W.*

[48] *To staunch the blood by breathing of the vein*] The loyalists supposed that by this line Dryden meant to allude to Cromwell's *murder of his sovereign*. Thus in 'The Laureat,' or 'Jack Squabb's History in a little drawn, Down to his evening, from his early dawn,' ver. 21—25.

> 'Nay, had our Charles, by heaven's severe decree,
> Been found, and murther'd in the royal tree,
> Even thou hadst prais'd the fact; his father slain,
> Thou call'st but gently breathing of a vein.' *M.*

Swift and resistless through the land he past,
Like that bold Greek who did the East subdue,
And made to battles such heroic haste,
As if on wings of victory he flew.

He fought secure of fortune as of fame:
Still, by new maps, the island might be shown,
Of conquests, which he strew'd where'er he came,
Thick as the galaxy with stars is sown.

His palms, though under weights they did not stand,
Still thriv'd; no winter could his laurels fade:
Heaven in his portrait show'd a workman's hand,
And drew it perfect, yet without a shade.

Peace was the prize of all his toil and care,
Which war had banish'd, and did now restore:
Bologna's walls thus mounted in the air,
To seat themselves more surely than before.

Her safety rescued Ireland to him owes;
And treacherous Scotland to no interest true,
Yet blest that fate which did his arms dispose
Her land to civilize, as to subdue.

Nor was he like those stars which only shine,
When to pale mariners they storms portend:
He had his calmer influence, and his mien
Did love and majesty together blend.

'Tis true, his countenance did imprint an awe;
And naturally all souls to his did bow,
As wands of divination downward draw,
And point to beds where sovereign gold doth grow.

When past all offerings to Feretrian Jove,
He Mars depos'd, and arms to gowns made yield;
Successful councils did him soon approve
As fit for close intrigues, as open field.

To suppliant Holland he vouchsaf'd a peace,
Our once bold rival of the British main,
Now tamely glad her unjust claim to cease,
And buy our friendship with her idol, gain.

Fame of the asserted sea through Europe blown,
Made France and Spain ambitious of his love;
Each knew that side must conquer he would own;
And for him fiercely, as for empire, strove.

No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embrac'd,
Than the light Monsieur the grave Don outweigh'd:
His fortune turn'd the scale where'er 'twas cast;
Though Indian mines were in the other laid.

When absent, yet we conquer'd in his right:
For though some meaner artist's skill were shown
In mingling colours, or in placing light;
Yet still the fair designment was his own.

[95] *designment*] He has borrowed this word from Spenser, F. Q. ii. xi. 10.

' 'Gainst which the second troupe *dessignment* makes :'

That is, *plot*. Dryden, however, uses it simply for *design* or *plan*. It should be added, that *dessignment* is the reading of Spenser's 2nd edition; as the first reads, without perspicuity, *assignment*. *Todd*.

For from all tempers he could service draw;
The worth of each, with its alloy, he knew,
And, as the confidant of Nature, saw
How she complexions did divide and brew.

Or he their single virtues did survey,
By intuition, in his own large breast,
Where all the rich ideas of them lay,
That were the rule and measure to the rest.

When such heroic virtue heaven sets out,
The stars, like commons, sullenly obey;
Because it drains them when it comes about,
And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

From this high spring our foreign conquests flow,
Which yet more glorious triumphs do portend;
Since their commencement to his arms they owe,
If springs as high as fountains may ascend.

He made us freemen of the continent,
Whom nature did like captives treat before;
To nobler preys the English lion sent,
And taught him first in Belgian walks to roar.

That old unquestion'd pirate of the land,
Proud Rome, with dread the fate of Dunkirk heard;

113 *He made us freemen, &c.*] We may be said to have been made freemen of the continent by the taking of Dunkirk, which was wrested from the Spaniards by the united forces of France and England, and delivered up to the latter in the beginning of 1658. *Derrick.*

And trembling wish'd behind more Alps to stand,
Although an Alexander were her guard.

By his command we boldly cross'd the line,
And bravely fought where southern stars arise;
We trac'd the far-fetch'd gold unto the mine,
And that which brib'd our fathers made our prize.

Such was our prince; yet own'd a soul above
The highest acts it could produce to show:
Thus poor mechanic arts in public move,
Whilst the deep secrets beyond practice go.

Nor died he when his ebbing fame went less,
But when fresh laurels courted him to live:
He seem'd but to prevent some new success,
As if above what triumphs earth could give.

His latest victories still thickest came,
As near the centre motion doth increase;
'Till he, press'd down by his own weighty name,
Did, like the vestal, under spoils decease.

But first the ocean as a tribute sent
The giant prince of all her watery herd;
And the isle, when her protecting genius went,
Upon his obsequies loud sighs conferr'd.

No civil broils have since his death arose,
But faction now by habit does obey;
And wars have that respect for his repose,
As winds for halcyons, when they breed at sea.

[120] *Although an Alexander, &c.*] At this time Alexander VII. sat in the papal chair. *D.*

His ashes in a peaceful urn shall rest,
His name a great example stands, to show
How strangely high endeavours may be blest,
Where piety and valour jointly go.

ASTRÆA REDUX.

A POEM

ON THE HAPPY RESTORATION AND RETURN OF HIS SACRED MAJESTY CHARLES II. 1660.

Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna. VIRG.

The last great age foretold by sacred rhymes
Renews its finish'd course; Saturnian times
Roll round again.

Now with a general peace the world was blest,
While ours, a world divided from the rest,
A dreadful quiet felt, and worser far
Than arms, a sullen interval of war:
Thus when black clouds draw down the lab'ring skies,
Ere yet abroad the winged thunder flies,
A horrid stillness first invades the ear,
And in that silence we the tempest fear.

[1] *Now with a general*] *Waller*, as well as Dryden, altered his sentiments, and changed his notes, on the Restoration; and when the king hinted to him the inferiority of his second poem to the former, answered, 'Poets, Sir, succeed better in fiction than in truth.' What notice Charles took of Dryden's Astræa we are ignorant. *Dr. Joseph Warton.*

The ambitious Swede, like restless billows tost,
On this hand gaining what on that he lost,
Though in his life he blood and ruin breath'd,
To his now guideless kingdom peace bequeath'd.
And heaven, that seem'd regardless of our fate,
For France and Spain did miracles create;
Such mortal quarrels to compose in peace,
As nature bred, and interest did increase.
We sigh'd to hear the fair Iberian bride
Must grow a lily to the lily's side,
While our cross stars denied us Charles his bed,
Whom our first flames and virgin love did wed.
For his long absence church and state did groan;
Madness the pulpit, faction seiz'd the throne:
Experienc'd age in deep despair was lost,
To see the rebel thrive, the loyal crost:
Youth, that with joys had unacquainted been,
Envied gray hairs that once good days had seen;
We thought our sires, not with their own content,

[22] *Madness the pulpit*] From the numerous sermons preached before the parliament, particularly from 1640 to 1650, a variety of curious examples might be adduced to prove the justness of Dryden's assertion. And who can wonder at this assertion, when he is told that notifications of the following kind were affixed on walls and door posts: 'On such a day such a brewer's clerk *exerciseth*; such a tailor *expoundeth*; such a waterman *teacheth*!' See the Preface to Featly's *Dippers Dipt*, 4to. 1647. For a minute account of the ravings and rantings of many of the preachers before the parliament, the reader is referred to a collection of extracts from their discourses, entitled *Evangelium Armatum*, printed soon after the Restoration of King Charles II. *T.*

Had, ere we came to age, our portion spent.
Nor could our nobles hope their bold attempt,
Who ruin'd crowns would coronets exempt.
For when by their designing leaders taught
To strike at power which for themselves they sought,
The vulgar, gull'd into rebellion, arm'd;
Their blood to action by the prize was warm'd.
The sacred purple then and scarlet gown,
Like sanguine dye, to elephants was shown.
Thus when the bold Typhœus scal'd the sky,
And forc'd great Jove from his own heaven to fly,
(What king, what crown from treason's reach is free,
If Jove and Heaven can violated be?)
The lesser gods, that shar'd his prosperous state,
All suffer'd in the exil'd Thunderer's fate.
The rabble now such freedom did enjoy,
As winds at sea, that use it to destroy:
Blind as the Cyclop, and as wild as he,
They own'd a lawless savage liberty.
Like that our painted ancestors so priz'd,
Ere empire's arts their breasts had civiliz'd.
How great were then our Charles his woes, who
Was forc'd to suffer for himself and us! [thus
He, toss'd by fate, and hurried up and down,
Heir to his father's sorrows, with his crown,
Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age;
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.
Unconquer'd yet in that forlorn estate,
His manly courage overcame his fate.
His wounds he took, like Romans, on his breast,

Which by his virtue were with laurels drest.
As souls reach heaven while yet in bodies pent,
So did he live above his banishment.
That sun, which we beheld with cozen'd eyes
Within the water, mov'd along the skies.
How easy 'tis, when destiny proves kind,
With full-spread sails to run before the wind!
But those that 'gainst stiff gales laveering go,
Must be at once resolv'd and skilful too.
He would not, like soft Otho, hope prevent,
But stay'd and suffer'd fortune to repent.
These virtues Galba in a stranger sought,
And Piso to adopted empire brought.
How shall I then my doubtful thoughts express,
That must his sufferings both regret and bless?
For when his early valour Heaven had crost;
And all at Worcester but the honour lost;
Forc'd into exile from his rightful throne,
He made all countries where he came his own;
And viewing monarchs' secret arts of sway,
A royal factor for his kingdoms lay.
Thus banish'd David spent abroad his time,
When to be God's anointed was his crime;
And when restor'd, made his proud neighbours rue
Those choice remarks he from his travels drew.
Nor is he only by afflictions shown
To conquer others realms, but rule his own:
Recovering hardly what he lost before,
His right endears it much; his purchase more.
Inur'd to suffer ere he came to reign,

No rash procedure will his actions stain:
To business ripen'd by digestive thought,
His future rule is into method brought:
As they who first proportion understand,
With easy practice reach a master's hand.
Well might the ancient poets then confer
On Night the honour'd name of Counsellor,
Since struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,
We light alone in dark afflictions find.
In such adversities to sceptres train'd,
The name of Great his famous grandsire gain'd;
Who yet a king alone in name and right,
With hunger, cold, and angry Jove did fight;
Shock'd by a Covenanting League's vast powers,
As holy and as catholic as ours:
Till fortune's fruitless spite had made it known,
Her blows not shook but riveted his throne.
Some lazy ages, lost in sleep and ease,
No action leave to busy chronicles:
Such, whose supine felicity but makes
In story chasms, in epochas mistakes;
O'er whom Time gently shakes his wings of down,
Till with his silent sickle they are mown.
Such is not Charles his too too active age,

111 *Charles his too too active age*] Original edition. Derrick prints, 'Such is not *Charles*' too too active age.'

See also before, ver. 49. *Too too* active age, was an ancient formulary. So in H. Parrot's *Springes for Woodcocks*, 12mo. Lond. 1613, Epigram 133, Lib. 1.

——— 'tis knowne her iesting's *too too* evill.'

And even in prose, as in Penri's *Exhortation vnto the*

Which, govern'd by the wild distemper'd rage
Of some black star infecting all the skies,
Made him at his own cost like Adam wise.
Tremble, ye nations, who secure before,
Laugh'd at those arms that 'gainst ourselves we bore;
Rous'd by the lash of his own stubborn tail,
Our lion now will foreign foes assail.
With alga who the sacred altar strews?
To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes:
A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain,
A lamb to you, ye tempests of the main:
For those loud storms that did against him roar
Have cast his shipwreck'd vessel on the shore.
Yet as wise artists mix their colours so,
That by degrees they from each other go:
Black steals unheeded from the neighb'ring white.
Without offending the well-cozen'd sight:
So on us stole our blessed change; while we
The effect did feel, but scarce the manner see.
Frosts that constrain the ground, and birth deny
To flowers that in its womb expecting lie,

Gouernours, &c. of Wales, 1588, p. 51. 'The case is *too too* manifest.' *Too too* for *exceeding* is also used in the Lancashire dialect. I venture to add part of P. Fletcher's well-drawn character of Lasciviousness personified, *Purp. Isl.* edit. 1633, p. 90.

'Broad were his jests, wilde his uncivil sport;
His fashion *too too* fond, and loosly light:
A long love-lock on his left shoulder plight,
Like to a woman's hair, well shew'd a woman's sprite.' *T.*

Do seldom their usurping power withdraw,
But raging floods pursue their hasty thaw.
Our thaw was mild, the cold not chas'd away,
But lost in kindly heat of lengthen'd day.
Heaven would no bargain for its blessings drive,
But what we could not pay for, freely give.
The Prince of peace would like himself confer
A gift unhop'd, without the price of war:
Yet, as he knew his blessing's worth, took care,
That we should know it by repeated prayer;
Which storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles from thence,
As heaven itself is took by violence.
Booth's forward valour only serv'd to show
He durst that duty pay we all did owe:
The attempt was fair; but heaven's prefixed hour
Not come: so like the watchful traveller
That by the moon's mistaken light did rise,
Lay down again, and clos'd his weary eyes.
'Twas Monk, whom Providence design'd to loose
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.

145 *Booth's forward valour*, &c.] In 1659, Sir George Booth assembled a considerable body of men for the king's service in Cheshire, and possessed himself of Chester, Chick-castle, and several other places, being joined by the Earl of Derby, Lord Kilmurray, Sir Thomas Middleton, Major-general Egerton, with other loyal gentlemen, who encountering with Lambert, general of the parliament's forces, were entirely routed at Winnington-bridge, near Northwich, in Cheshire, and most of the principal people made prisoners. *D.*

The blessed saints that watch'd this turning scene,
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,
Not in their bulk but in their order strong.
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With ease such fond chimæras we pursue,
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue:
But when ourselves to action we betake,
It shuns the mint like gold that chymists make.
How hard was then his task! at once to be
What in the body natural we see!
Man's architect distinctly did ordain
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense;
The springs of motion from the seat of sense.
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay.
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
Would let him play awhile upon the hook.
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
At first embracing what it straight doth crush.
Wise leeches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude:
Deaf to complaints they wait upon the ill,
Till some safe crisis authorise their skill.
Nor could his acts too close a vizard wear,
To 'scape their eyes whom guilt had taught to fear,
And guard with caution that polluted nest,
Whence Legion twice before was dispossest:

Once sacred house; which when they enter'd in,
They thought the place could sanctify a sin;
Like those that vainly hop'd kind heaven would wink,
While to excess on martyrs' tombs they drink.
And as devouter Turks first warn their souls
To part, before they taste forbidden bowls:
So these, when their black crimes they went about,
First timely charm'd their useless conscience out.
Religion's name against itself was made;
The shadow serv'd the substance to invade:
Like zealous missions, they did care pretend
Of souls in show, but made the gold their end.
Th' incensed powers beheld with scorn from high
A heaven so far distant from the sky, [ground,
Which durst, with horses' hoofs that beat the
And martial brass, bely the thunder's sound.
'Twas hence at length just vengeance thought it fit
To speed their ruin by their impious wit.
Thus Sforza, curs'd with a too fertile brain,
Lost by his wiles the power his wit did gain.
Henceforth their fougue must spend at lesser rate,
Than in its flames to wrap a nation's fate.
Suffer'd to live, they are like Helots set,
A virtuous shame within us to beget.
For by example most we sinn'd before,
And glass-like clearness mix'd with frailty bore.
But since reform'd by what we did amiss,
We by our suff'rings learn to prize our bliss:
Like early lovers, whose unpractis'd hearts

Were long the may-game of malicious arts,
When once they find their jealousies were vain,
With double heat renew their fires again.
'Twas this produc'd the joy that hurried o'er
Such swarms of English to the neighb'ring shore,
To fetch that prize, by which Batavia made
So rich amends for our impoverish'd trade.
Oh had you seen from Schevelin's barren shore,
(Crowded with troops, and barren now no more,)
Afflicted Holland to his farewell bring
True sorrow, Holland to regret a king!
While waiting him his royal fleet did ride,
And willing winds to their lower'd sails denied.
The wav'ring streamers, flags, and standard out,
The merry seamen's rude but cheerful shout;
And last, the cannons' voice that shook the skies,
And, as it fares in sudden ecstasies,
At once bereft us both of ears and eyes.
The Naseby, now no longer England's shame,
But better to be lost in Charles his name,
(Like some unequal bride in nobler sheets)
Receives her lord: the joyful London meets
The princely York, himself alone a freight;
The Swift-sure groans beneath great Gloster's weight:
Secure as when the halcyon breeds, with these
He that was born to drown might cross the seas.
Heaven could not own a Providence, and take
The wealth three nations ventur'd at a stake.
The same indulgence Charles his voyage bless'd,

Which in his right had miracles confess'd.
The winds that never moderation knew,
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew:
Or out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
Their straighten'd lungs, or conscious of their charge.
The British Amphitrite, smooth and clear,
In richer azure never did appear;
Proud her returning Prince to entertain
With the submitted fasces of the main.

And welcome now, great monarch, to your own;
Behold th' approaching cliffs of Albion:
It is no longer motion cheats your view,
As you meet it, the land approacheth you.
The land returns, and, in the white it wears,
The marks of penitence and sorrow bears.
But you, whose goodness your descent doth show,
Your heavenly parentage and earthly too;
By that same mildness, which your father's crown
Before did ravish, shall secure your own.
Not tied to rules of policy, you find
Revenge less sweet than a forgiving mind.
Thus, when the Almighty would to Moses give
A sight of all he could behold and live;
A voice before his entry did proclaim
Long-suffering, goodness, mercy, in his name.
Your power to justice doth submit your cause,
Your goodness only is above the laws;
Whose rigid letter, while pronounc'd by you,

Is softer made. So winds that tempests brew,
When through Arabian groves they take their flight,
Made wanton with rich odours, lose their spite.
And as those lees that trouble it, refine
The agitated soul of generous wine:
So tears of joy, for your returning, spilt,
Work out, and expiate our former guilt.
Methinks I see those crowds on Dover's strand,
Who, in their haste to welcome you to land,
Chok'd up the beach with their still growing store,
And made a wilder torrent on the shore:
While, spurr'd with eager thoughts of past delight,
Those, who had seen you, court a second sight;
Preventing still your steps, and making haste
To meet you often, wheresoe'er you past.
How shall I speak of that triumphant day,
When you renew'd th' expiring pomp of May!
(A month that owns an interest in your name:
You and the flowers are its peculiar claim.)
That star that at your birth shone out so bright,
It stain'd the duller sun's meridian light,
Did once again its potent fires renew,
Guiding our eyes to find and worship you.
And now Time's whiter series is begun,
Which in soft centuries shall smoothly run:
Those clouds, that overcast your morn, shall fly,
Dispell'd to farthest corners of the sky.
Our nation with united interest blest,
Not now content to poise, shall sway the rest.
Abroad your empire shall no limits know,

But, like the sea, in boundless circles flow.
Your much-lov'd fleet shall, with a wide command,
Besiege the petty monarchs of the land:
And as old Time his offspring swallow'd down,
Our ocean in its depths all seas shall drown.
Their wealthy trade from pirates' rapine free,
Our merchants shall no more adventurers be:
Nor in the farthest east those dangers fear,
Which humble Holland must dissemble here.
Spain to your gift alone her Indies owes;
For what the powerful takes not he bestows:
And France, that did an exile's presence fear,
May justly apprehend you still too near.
At home the hateful names of parties cease,
And factious souls are wearied into peace.
The discontented now are only they,
Whose crimes before did your just cause betray:
Of those your edicts some reclaim from sins,
But most your life and blest example wins.
Oh happy prince, whom heaven hath taught the way
By paying vows to have more vows to pay!
Oh happy age! Oh times like those alone,
By fate reserv'd for great Augustus' throne!
When the joint growth of arms and art foreshow
The world a monarch, and that monarch you.

TO HIS SACRED MAJESTY.

A PANEGYRIC ON HIS CORONATION.

In that wild deluge where the world was drown'd,
When life and sin one common tomb had found,
The first small prospect of a rising hill
With various notes of joy the ark did fill:
Yet when that flood in its own depths was drown'd,
It left behind it false and slippery ground;
And the more solemn pomp was still deferr'd,
Till new-born nature in fresh looks appear'd.
Thus, royal sir, to see you landed here,
Was cause enough of triumph for a year:
Nor would your care those glorious joys repeat,
Till they at once might be secure and great:
Till your kind beams, by their continu'd stay,
Had warm'd the ground, and call'd the damps away.
Such vapours, while your powerful influence dries,
Then soonest vanish when they highest rise.
Had greater haste these sacred rites prepar'd,
Some guilty months had in your triumphs shar'd:
But this untainted year is all your own;
Your glories may without our crimes be shown.
We had not yet exhausted all our store,
When you refresh'd our joys by adding more:
As heaven, of old, dispens'd celestial dew,
You gave us manna, and still give us new.
Now our sad ruins are remov'd from sight,

The season too comes fraught with new delight:
Time seems not now beneath his years to stoop,
Nor do his wings with sickly feathers droop:
Soft western winds waft o'er the gaudy spring,
And open'd scenes of flowers and blossoms bring,
To grace this happy day, while you appear,
Not king of us alone, but of the year.
All eyes you draw, and with the eyes the heart:
Of your own pomp yourself the greatest part:
Loud shouts the nation's happiness proclaim,
And heaven this day is feasted with your name.
Your cavalcade the fair spectators view
From their high standings, yet look up to you.
From your brave train each singles out a prey,
And longs to date a conquest from your day.
Now charg'd with blessings while you seek repose,
Officious slumbers haste your eyes to close:
And glorious dreams stand ready to restore
The pleasing shapes of all you saw before.
Next to the sacred temple you are led,
Where waits a crown for your more sacred head:
How justly from the church that crown is due,
Preserv'd from ruin, and restor'd by you!
The grateful choir their harmony employ,
Not to make greater, but more solemn joy.
Wrapt soft and warm your name is sent on high,
As flames do on the wings of incense fly:
Music herself is lost, in vain she brings
Her choicest notes to praise the best of kings:
Her melting strains in you a tomb have found,

And lie like bees in their own sweetness drown'd.
He that brought peace, all discord could atone,
His name is music of itself alone.
Now while the sacred oil anoints your head,
And fragrant scents, begun from you, are spread
Through the large dome; the people's joyful sound,
Sent back, is still preserv'd in hallow'd ground;
Which in one blessing mix'd descends on you;
As heighten'd spirits fall in richer dew.
Not that our wishes do increase your store,
Full of your self you can admit no more;
We add not to your glory, but employ
Our time, like angels, in expressing joy.
Nor is it duty, or our hopes alone,
Create that joy, but full fruition:
We know those blessings, which we must possess,
And judge of future by past happiness.
No promise can oblige a prince so much
Still to be good, as long to have been such.
A noble emulation heats your breast,
And your own fame now robs you of your rest.
Good actions still must be maintain'd with good,
As bodies nourish'd with resembling food.
You have already quench'd sedition's brand;
And zeal, which burnt it, only warms the land.
The jealous sects, that dare not trust their cause,
So far from their own will as to the laws,
You for their umpire and their synod take,
And their appeal alone to Cæsar make.
Kind heaven so rare a temper did provide,

That guilt repenting might in it confide.
Among our crimes oblivion may be set;
But 'tis our king's perfection to forget.
Virtues unknown to these rough northern climes
From milder heavens you bring without their crimes,
Your calmness does no after-storms provide,
Nor seeming patience mortal anger hide.
When empire first from families did spring,
Then every father govern'd as a king:
But you, that are a sovereign prince, allay
Imperial power with your paternal sway.
From those great cares when ease your soul unbends,
Your pleasures are design'd to noble ends:
Born to command the mistress of the seas,
Your thoughts themselves in that blue empire please.
Hither in summer evenings you repair
To taste the fraicheur of the purer air:
Undaunted here you ride, when winter raves,
With Cæsar's heart that rose above the waves.
More I could sing, but fear my numbers stays;
No loyal subject dares that courage praise.
In stately frigates most delight you find,
Where well-drawn battles fire your martial mind.
What to your cares we owe, is learnt from hence,
When even your pleasures serve for our defence.
Beyond your court flows in th' admitted tide,
Where in new depths the wondering fishes glide:
Here in a royal bed the waters sleep;
When tir'd at sea, within this bay they creep.

Here the mistrustful fowl no harm suspects,
So safe are all things which our king protects.
From your lov'd Thames a blessing yet is due,
Second alone to that it brought in you;
A queen, near whose chaste womb, ordain'd by fate,
The souls of kings unborn for bodies wait.
It was your love before made discord cease:
Your love is destin'd to your country's peace.
Both Indies, rivals in your bed, provide
With gold or jewels to adorn your bride.
This to a mighty king presents rich ore,
While that with incense does a god implore.
Two kingdoms wait your doom, and, as you choose,
This must receive a crown, or that must lose.
Thus from your royal oak, like Jove's of old,
Are answers sought, and destinies foretold:
Propitious oracles are begg'd with vows,
And crowns that grow upon the sacred boughs.
Your subjects, while you weigh the nation's fate,
Suspend to both their doubtful love or hate:
Choose only, sir, that so they may possess,
With their own peace their children's happiness.

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR HYDE,*

PRESENTED ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1662.

MY LORD,

WHILE flattering crowds officiously appear,
To give themselves, not you, a happy year;
And by the greatness of their presents prove
How much they hope, but not how well they love;
The Muses, who your early courtship boast,
Though now your flames are with their beauty lost,
Yet watch their time, that, if you have forgot
They were your mistresses, the world may not:
Decay'd by time and wars, they only prove

* Edward, Earl of Clarendon, to whom this poem is addressed, having followed the fortune of the king, was appointed secretary of state at Bruges, and constituted lord high chancellor of England on the demise of Sir Richard Lane. He was confirmed in this last post at the Restoration, when he was also chosen chancellor of the university of Oxford, in the room of the Duke of Somerset, and created Baron Hindon, Viscount Cornbury, and Earl of Clarendon.

He was too honest for a court; his plain dealing and integrity ruined him; the king, abandoned to pleasure, was impatient of admonition, and Hyde was not sparing of it: this paved the way for his disgrace. He was prosecuted with great acrimony by the Earl of Bristol, who impeached him in the House of Peers. Finding his party too weak to support him, he retired to Rouen, where he died in 1674. He is said to have been concerned in selling Dunkirk to the French. He was an able lawyer, a great statesman, and an elegant writer. *D.*

Their former beauty by your former love;
And now present, as ancient ladies do,
That courted long, at length are forc'd to woo.
For still they look on you with such kind eyes,
As those that see the Church's sovereign rise;
From their own order chose, in whose high state
They think themselves the second choice of fate.
When our great monarch into exile went,
Wit and religion suffer'd banishment.
Thus once, when Troy was wrapp'd in fire and smoke,
The helpless gods their burning shrines forsook;
They with the vanquish'd prince and party go,
And leave their temples empty to the foe.
At length the Muses stand, restor'd again
To that great charge which nature did ordain;
And their lov'd Druids seem reviv'd by fate,
While you dispense the laws, and guide the state.
The nation's soul, our monarch, does dispense,
Through you, to us his vital influence;
You are the channel, where those spirits flow,
And work them higher, as to us they go.

In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,
Until the earth seems join'd unto the sky:
So in this hemisphere our utmost view
Is only bounded by our king and you:
Our sight is limited where you are join'd,
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.
So well your virtues do with his agree,
That, though your orbs of different greatness be,
Yet both are for each other's use dispos'd,

His to inclose, and yours to be inclos'd.
Nor could another in your room have been,
Except an emptiness had come between.
Well may he then to you his cares impart,
And share his burden where he shares his heart.
In you his sleep still wakes; his pleasures find
Their share of business in your laboring mind.
So when the weary sun his place resigns,
He leaves his light, and by reflection shines.
Justice, that sits and frowns where public laws
Exclude soft mercy from a private cause,
In your tribunal most herself does please;
There only smiles because she lives at ease;
And, like young David, finds her strength the more,
When disencumber'd from those arms she wore.
Heaven would our royal master should exceed
Most in that virtue, which we most did need;
And his mild father (who too late did find
All mercy vain but what with power was join'd)
His fatal goodness left to fitter times,
Not to increase, but to absolve our crimes:
But when the heir of this vast treasure knew
How large a legacy was left to you,
(Too great for any subject to retain)
He wisely tied it to the crown again:
Yet, passing through your hands, it gathers more,
As streams, through mines, bear tincture of their ore.
While empiric politicians use deceit,
Hide what they give, and cure but by a cheat;

You boldly show that skill which they pretend,
And work by means as noble as your end;
Which should you veil, we might unwind the clue,
As men do nature, till we came to you.
And as the Indies were not found, before
Those rich perfumes, which, from the happy shore,
The winds upon their balmy wings convey'd,
Whose guilty sweetness first their world betray'd;
So by your counsels we are brought to view
A rich and undiscover'd world in you.
By you our monarch does that fame assure,
Which kings must have, or cannot live secure:
For prosp'rous princes gain their subjects' heart,
Who love that praise in which themselves have [part.
By you he fits those subjects to obey,
As heaven's eternal monarch does convey
His power unseen, and man, to his designs
By his bright ministers the stars, inclines.
  Our setting sun from his declining seat
Shot beams of kindness on you, not of heat:
And, when his love was bounded in a few,
That were unhappy that they might be true,
Made you the favourite of his last sad times,
That is a suff'rer in his subjects' crimes:
Thus those first favours you received were sent,
Like heaven's rewards in earthly punishment.
Yet fortune, conscious of your destiny,
E'en then took care to lay you softly by;

87 *Our setting sun*] Charles I. employed him in writing some of his declarations. *Dr. J. W.*

And wrapp'd your fate among her precious things,
Kept fresh to be unfolded with your king's.
Shown all at once you dazzled so our eyes,
As new-born Pallas did the gods surprise;
When, springing forth from Jove's new-closing wound,
She struck the warlike spear into the ground;
Which sprouting leaves did suddenly inclose,
And peaceful olives shaded as they rose.
How strangely active are the arts of peace,
Whose restless motions less than war's do cease!
Peace is not freed from labour but from noise;
And war more force, but not more pains employs:
Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind,
That, like the earth, it leaves our sense behind,
While you so smoothly turn and roll our sphere,
That rapid motion does but rest appear.
For, as in nature's swiftness, with the throng
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along.
All seems at rest to the deluded eye,
Mov'd by the soul of the same harmony,
So, carried on by your unwearied care,
We rest in peace, and yet in motion share.
Let envy then those crimes within you see,
From which the happy never must be free;
Envy, that does with misery reside,
The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.
Think it not hard, if at so cheap a rate
You can secure the constancy of fate,
Whose kindness sent what does their malice seem,

By lesser ills the greater to redeem.
Nor can we this weak shower a tempest call,
But drops of heat, that in the sunshine fall.
You have already wearied fortune so,
She cannot farther be your friend or foe;
But sits all breathless, and admires to feel
A fate so weighty, that it stops our wheel.
In all things else above our humble fate,
Your equal mind yet swells not into state,
But, like some mountain in those happy isles,
Where in perpetual spring young nature smiles,
Your greatness shows: no horror to affright,
But trees for shade, and flowers to court the sight:
Sometimes the hill submits itself a while
In small descents, which do its height beguile;
And sometimes mounts, but so as billows play,
Whose rise not hinders but makes short our way.
Your brow, which does no fear of thunder know,
Sees rolling tempests vainly beat below;
And, like Olympus' top, th' impression wears
Of love and friendship writ in former years.
Yet, unimpair'd with labours, or with time,
Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.
Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,

139 *Sometimes the hill submits itself a while*
In small descents]
'———— quà se subducere colles
Incipiunt, mollique jugum demittere clivo.'
Virgil, Ecl. ix. 8. *J. W.*

140 *Thus heavenly*] Dr. Johnson is of opinion, that 'in this poem he seems to have collected all his powers.' I should

And measure change, but share no part of it.
And still it shall without a weight increase,
Like this new-year, whose motions never cease.
For since the glorious course you have begun
Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun,
It must both weightless and immortal prove,
Because the centre of it is above.

SATIRE ON THE DUTCH.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1662.*

As needy gallants, in the scrivener's hands,
Court the rich knaves that gripe their mortgag'd lands;
The first fat buck of all the season's sent,
And keeper takes no fee in compliment;
The dotage of some Englishmen is such,
To fawn on those, who ruin them, the Dutch.
They shall have all, rather than make a war
With those, who of the same religion are.
The Straits, the Guiney-trade, the herrings too;
Nay, to keep friendship, they shall pickle you.

lament if this were true. But then he adds, 'He has concluded with lines of which I think not myself obliged to tell the meaning.' *Dr. J. W.*

* This poem is no more than a prologue a little altered, prefixed to our author's tragedy of Amboyna. *D.*

Some are resolved not to find out the cheat,
But, cuckold-like, love them that do the feat.
What injuries soe'er upon us fall,
Yet still the same religion answers all.
Religion wheedled us to civil war, [spare.
Drew English blood, and Dutchmen's now would
Be gull'd no longer; for you'll find it true,
They have no more religion, faith! than you.
Interest's the god they worship in their state,
And we, I take it, have not much of that.
Well monarchies may own religion's name,
But states are atheists in their very frame.
They share a sin; and such proportions fall,
That, like a stink, 'tis nothing to them all.
Think on their rapine, falsehood, cruelty,
And that what once they were, they still would be.
To one well-born th' affront is worse and more,
When he's abus'd and baffled by a boor.
With an ill grace the Dutch their mischiefs do;
They've both ill nature and ill manners too.
Well may they boast themselves an ancient nation;
For they were bred ere manners were in fashion:
And their new commonwealth has set them free
Only from honour and civility.
Venetians do not more uncouthly ride,
Than did their lubber state mankind bestride.
Their sway became 'em with as ill a mien,
As their own paunches swell above their chin.
Yet is their empire no true growth but humour,
And only two kings' touch can cure the tumour.

As Cato, fruits of Afric did display; 41
Let us before our eyes their Indies lay:
All loyal English will like him conclude;
Let Cæsar live, and Carthage be subdu'd.

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS,*

ON THE MEMORABLE VICTORY GAINED BY THE DUKE OVER THE HOLLANDERS, JUNE 3, 1665, AND ON HER JOURNEY AFTERWARDS INTO THE NORTH.

MADAM,

When for our sakes your hero you resign'd
To swelling seas, and every faithless wind;
When you releas'd his courage, and set free
A valour fatal to the enemy;
You lodg'd your country's cares within your breast,
(The mansion where soft love should only rest:)

41 *As Cato,* &c.] Compare the *Annus Mirabilis,* stan. 173.

> "As once old Cato in the Roman fight,
> The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold." *T.*

44 *and Carthage*] The very words and allusion by Lord Shaftesbury, in his famous speech against the Dutch.

* The lady to whom our author addresses this poem was daughter to the great Earl of Clarendon. The Duke of York had been some time married to her, before the affair was known either to the king his brother, or to her father. She died in March, 1671, leaving issue one son, named Edgar,

And, ere our foes abroad were overcome,
The noblest conquest you had gain'd at home.
Ah, what concerns did both your souls divide!
Your honour gave us what your love denied:
And 'twas for him much easier to subdue
Those foes he fought with, than to part from you.
That glorious day, which two such navies saw,
As each unmatch'd might to the world give law.
Neptune, yet doubtful whom he should obey,
Held to them both the trident of the sea:
The winds were hush'd, the waves in ranks were cast,
As awfully as when God's people past:
Those, yet uncertain on whose sails to blow,
These, where the wealth of nations ought to flow.
Then with the duke your highness rul'd the day:
While all the brave did his command obey,
The fair and pious under you did pray.
How powerful are chaste vows! the wind and tide
You brib'd to combat on the English side.
Thus to your much-lov'd lord you did convey

and three daughters, Katherine, Mary, and Ann. The two latter lived to sit on the British throne; the two former survived their mother but a short time. Bishop Burnet tells us, that she was a woman of knowledge and penetration, friendly and generous, but severe in her resentments. *D.*

[26] *your much-lov'd lord*] James, notwithstanding, had many mistresses. Lady Dorchester, says Lord Orford, Vol. IV. p. 319, 4to. said wittily, she wondered for what James II. chose his mistresses. We are none of us handsome, and if we had wit, he has not enough to discover it. And once meeting the Duchess of Portsmouth and Lady

An unknown succour, sent the nearest way.
New vigour to his wearied arms you brought,
(So Moses was upheld while Israel fought)
While, from afar, we heard the cannon play,
Like distant thunder on a shiny day.
For absent friends we were asham'd to fear,
When we consider'd what you ventur'd there.
Ships, men, and arms, our country might restore,
But such a leader could supply no more.
With generous thoughts of conquest he did burn,
Yet fought not more to vanquish than return.
Fortune and victory he did pursue,
To bring them as his slaves to wait on you.
Thus beauty ravish'd the rewards of fame,
And the fair triumph'd when the brave o'ercame.
Then, as you meant to spread another way,
By land your conquests, far as his by sea,
Leaving our southern clime, you march'd along
The stubborn North, ten thousand Cupids strong.
Like commons the nobility resort,
In crowding heaps, to fill your moving court:
To welcome your approach the vulgar run,
Like some new envoy from the distant sun,
And country beauties by their lovers go,
Blessing themselves, and wondering at the show.
So when the new-born Phœnix first is seen,

Orkney, the favourite of King William, at the drawing-room of George I. she exclaimed, "Good God! who would have thought that we three should have met together here!'

Dr. J. W.

Her feather'd subjects all adore their queen,
And while she makes her progress through the East,
From every grove her numerous train's increast:
Each poet of the air her glory sings, [wings.
And round him the pleas'd audience clap their

[56] *her glory sings*] The Duchess of York, says Burnet, was an extraordinary woman. She had great knowledge, and a lively sense of things, but took state on her rather too much. She wrote well, and had begun the duke's life, of which she showed me a volume. She was bred to great strictness in religion, practised secret confession, and Morley was her confessor. *Dr. J. W.*

ANNUS MIRABILIS;

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, 1666.

AN HISTORICAL POEM.

TO THE

METROPOLIS OF GREAT BRITAIN,

THE MOST RENOWNED AND LATE FLOURISHING CITY OF LONDON, IN ITS REPRESENTATIVES THE LORD MAYOR AND COURT OF ALDERMEN, THE SHERIFFS, AND COMMON COUNCIL OF IT.*

As perhaps I am the first who ever presented a work of this nature to the metropolis of any nation; so it is likewise consonant to justice, that he who was to give the first example of such a dedication should begin it with that city, which has set a pattern to all others of true loyalty, invincible courage, and unshaken constancy. Other cities have been praised for the same virtues, but I am much deceived if any have so dearly purchased their reputation; their fame has been won them by cheaper trials than an expensive, though necessary war, a consuming pestilence, and a more consuming fire. To submit yourselves with that humility to the judgments of Heaven, and at the same time to raise yourselves with that vigour above all human enemies; to be combated at once from above and from below, to be struck

* This dedication has been left out in all editions of the poem but the first. To me there appears in it an honest unfeigned warmth and a love for the king, which compensates for any thing that may have dropped from our author's pen in his verses on Cromwell's death; however, we submit this opinion under correction to the judicious reader. *D.*

down and to triumph: I know not whether such trials have been ever paralleled in any nation: the resolution and successes of them never can be. Never had prince or people more mutual reason to love each other, if suffering for each other can endear affection. You have come together a pair of matchless lovers, through many difficulties; he, through a long exile, various traverses of fortune, and the interposition of many rivals, who violently ravished and withheld you from him: and certainly you have had your share in sufferings. But Providence has cast upon you want of trade, that you might appear bountiful to your country's necessities; and the rest of your afflictions are not more the effects of God's displeasure (frequent examples of them having been in the reign of the most excellent princes) than occasions for the manifesting of your Christian and civil virtues. To you therefore this Year of Wonders is justly dedicated, because you have made it so. You, who are to stand a wonder to all years and ages, and who have built yourselves an immortal monument on your own ruins. You are now a phœnix in her ashes, and, as far as humanity can approach, a great emblem of the suffering Deity: but Heaven never made so much piety and virtue to leave it miserable. I have heard, indeed, of some virtuous persons who have ended unfortunately, but never of any virtuous nation: Providence is engaged too deeply, when the cause becomes so general; and I cannot imagine it has resolved the ruin of that people at home, which it has blessed abroad with such successes. I am therefore to conclude, that your sufferings are at an end; and that one part of my poem has not been more a history of your destruction, than the other a prophecy of your restoration. The accomplishment of which happiness, as it is the wish of all true Englishmen, so is it by none more passionately desired than by,

The greatest of your admirers,
And most humble of your servants,
JOHN DRYDEN.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ENSUING POEM,

IN A LETTER

TO THE HON. SIR ROBERT HOWARD.

SIR,

I AM so many ways obliged to you, and so little able to return your favours, that, like those who owe too much, I can only live by getting farther into your debt. You have not only been careful of my fortune, which was the effect of your nobleness, but you have been solicitous of my reputation, which is that of your kindness. It is not long since I gave you the trouble of perusing a play for me, and now, instead of an acknowledgment, I have given you a greater, in the correction of a poem. But since you are to bear this persecution, I will at least give you the encouragement of a martyr; you could never suffer in a nobler cause. For I have chosen the most heroic subject which any poet could desire: I have taken upon me to describe the motives, the beginning, progress, and successes, of a most just and necessary war: in it, the care, management, and prudence of our king; the conduct and valour of a royal admiral, and of two incomparable generals; the invincible courage of our captains and seamen; and three glorious victories, the result of all. After this, I have, in the fire, the most deplorable, but withal the greatest, argument that can be imagined: the destruction being so swift, so sudden, so vast, and miserable, as nothing can parallel in story. The former part of this poem, relating to the war, is but a due expiation for my not serving my king and country in it. All gentlemen are almost obliged to it; and I know no reason we should give that advantage to the commonalty of England, to be foremost in brave actions, which the noblesse of France would never suffer in their peasants. I should not have written this but to a person who has been ever forward to appear in all employments, whither his honour and generosity have called him. The latter part of my poem, which describes the fire, I owe, first to the piety and

fatherly affection of our monarch to his suffering subjects; and, in the second place, to the courage, loyalty, and magnanimity of the city; both which were so conspicuous, that I have wanted words to celebrate them as they deserve. I have called my poem Historical, not Epic, though both the actions and actors are as much heroic as any poem can contain. But since the action is not properly one, nor that accomplished in the last successes, I have judged it too bold a title for a few stanzas, which are little more in number than a single Iliad, or the longest of the Æneids. For this reason (I mean not of length, but broken action, tied too severely to the laws of history) I am apt to agree with those, who rank Lucan, rather among historians in verse, than Epic poets: in whose room, if I am not deceived, Silius Italicus, though a worse writer, may more justly be admitted. *I have chosen to write my poem in quatrains, or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble, and of greater dignity, both for the sound and number, than any other verse in use amongst us; in which I am sure I have your approbation. The learned languages have certainly a great advantage of us, in not being tied to the slavery of any rhyme; and were less constrained in the quantity of every syllable, which they might vary with spondees or dactyls, besides so many other helps of grammatical figures, for the lengthening or abbreviation of them, than the modern are in the close of that one syllable, which often confines, and more often corrupts, the sense of all the rest. But in this necessity of our rhymes, I have always found the couplet verse most easy, though not so proper for this occasion: for there the work is sooner at an end, every two lines concluding the labour of the poet; but in quatrains he is to carry it farther on, and not only so, but to bear along in his head the troublesome sense of four lines together. For those who write correctly in this kind, must needs acknowledge, that the last line of the stanza is to be considered in the composition of the first. Neither can we give ourselves the liberty of making any part of a verse for the sake of rhyme, or concluding with a word which is

* Dryden certainly soon changed his opinion, since he never after practised the manner of versification he has here praised: but we shall find it always his way to assure us, that his present mode of writing is best. Conscious of his own importance, he soared above control; and when he composed a poem, he set it up as a standard of imitation, deducing from it rules of criticism, the practice of which he endeavoured to enforce, till either through interest or fancy he was induced to change his opinion. *D.*

not current English, or using the variety of female rhymes; all which our fathers practised: and for the female rhymes, they are still in use amongst other nations; with the Italian in every line, with the Spaniard promiscuously, with the French alternately; as those who have read the Alarique, the Pucelle, or any of their later poems, will agree with me. And besides this, they write in Alexandrines, or verses of six feet; such as amongst us is the old translation of Homer, by Chapman: all which, by lengthening of their chain, makes the sphere of their activity the larger. I have dwelt too long upon the choice of my stanza, which you may remember is much better defended in the preface to Gondibert; and therefore I will hasten to acquaint you with my endeavours in the writing. In general I will only say, I have never yet seen the description of any naval fight in the proper terms which are used at sea; and if there be any such, in another language, as that of Lucan in the third of his Pharsalia, yet I could not avail myself of it in the English; the terms of art in every tongue bearing more of the idiom of it than any other words. We hear indeed among our poets, of the thundering of guns, the smoke, the disorder, and the slaughter; but all these are common notions. And certainly, as those who, in a logical dispute, keep in general terms, would hide a fallacy, so those who do it in any poetical description, would veil their ignorance.

> Descriptas servare vices operumque colores,
> Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, Poeta salutor?

For my own part, if I had little knowledge of the sea, yet I have thought it no shame to learn; and if I have made some few mistakes, it is only, as you can bear me witness, because I have wanted opportunity to correct them; the whole poem being first written, and now sent you from a place where I have not so much as the converse of any seaman. Yet though the trouble I had in writing it was great, it was more than recompensed by the pleasure. I found myself so warm in celebrating the praises of military men, two such especially as the Prince and General, that it is no wonder if they inspired me with thoughts above my ordinary level. And I am well satisfied that, as they are incomparably the best subject I ever had, excepting only the Royal Family, so also, that this I have written of them is much better than what I have performed on any other. I have been forced to help out other arguments; but this has been bountiful to me: they have been low and barren of praise, and I have

exalted them, and made them fruitful; but here—*Omnia sponte suâ reddit justissima tellus.* I have had a large, a fair, and a pleasant field; so fertile that without my cultivating, it has given me two harvests in a summer, and in both oppressed the reaper. All other greatness in subjects is only counterfeit; it will not endure the test of danger; the greatness of arms is only real; other greatness burdens a nation with its weight; this supports it with its strength. And as it is the happiness of the age, so it is the peculiar goodness of the best of kings, that we may praise his subjects without offending him. Doubtless it proceeds from a just confidence of his own virtue, which the lustre of no other can be so great as to darken in him; for the good or the valiant are never safely praised under a bad or a degenerate prince. But to return from this digression to a farther account of my poem; I must crave leave to tell you, that as I have endeavoured to adorn it with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution. The composition of all poems is, or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the poet, or wit-writing (if you will give me leave to use a school-distinction) is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory, till it springs the quarry it hunted after; or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or ideas of those things which it designs to represent. Wit written is that which is well defined, the happy result of thought, or product of imagination. But to proceed from wit, in the general notion of it, to the proper wit of an heroic or historical poem, I judge it chiefly to consist in the delightful imaging of persons, actions, passions, or things. It is not the jerk or sting of an epigram, nor the seeming contradiction of a poor antithesis, (the delight of an ill-judging audience in a play of rhyme) nor the gingle of a more poor Paranomasia; neither is it so much the morality of a grave sentence, affected by Lucan, but more sparingly used by Virgil; but it is some lively and apt description, dressed in such colours of speech, that it sets before your eyes the absent object as perfectly and more delightfully than nature. So then the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the

imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression. For the two first of these, Ovid is famous amongst the poets; for the latter, Virgil. Ovid images more often the movements and affections of the mind, either combating between two contrary passions, or extremely discomposed by one. His words therefore are the least part of his care; for he pictures natuie in disorder, with which the study and choice of words is inconsistent. This is the proper wit of dialogue or discourse, and consequently of the drama, where all that is said is to be supposed the effect of sudden thought; which, though it excludes not the quickness of wit in repartees, yet admits not a too curious election of words, too frequent allusions, or use of tropes, or in fine any thing that shows remoteness of thought or labour in the writer. On the other side, Virgil speaks not so often to us in the person of another, like Ovid, but in his own: he relates almost all things as from himself, and thereby gains more liberty than the other, to express his thoughts with all the graces of elocution, to write more figuratively, and to confess as well the labour, as the force of his imagination. Though he describes his Dido well and naturally, in the violence of her passions, yet he must yield in that to the Myrrha, the Biblis, the Althæa, of Ovid; for as great an admirer of him as I am, I must acknowledge, that if I see not more of their souls than I see of Dido's, at least I have a greater concernment for them: and that convinces me, that Ovid has touched those tender strokes more delicately than Virgil could. But when action or persons are to be described, when any such image is to be set before us, how bold, how masterly are the strokes of Virgil! We see the objects he presents us with in their native figures, in their proper motions; but so we see them, as our own eyes could never have beheld them so beautiful in themselves. We see the soul of the poet, like that universal one of which he speaks, informing and moving through all his pictures:

——Totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

We behold him embellishing his images, as he makes Venus breathing beauty upon her son Æneas.

'——— lumenque juventæ
Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflârat honores:
Quale manus addunt Ebori decus, aut ubi flavo
Argentum Pariusve lapis circundatur auro.'

See his Tempest, his Funeral Sports, his Combat of Turnus and Æneas: and in his Georgics, which I esteem the divinest part of all his writings, the Plague, the Country, the Battle of the Bulls, the Labour of the Bees, and those many other excellent images of nature, most of which are neither great in themselves, nor have any natural ornament to bear them up: but the words wherewith he describes them are so excellent, that it might be well applied to him, which was said by Ovid, *Materiam superabat opus:* the very sound of his words has often somewhat that is connatural to the subject; and while we read him, we sit, as in a play, beholding the scenes of what he represents. To perform this, he made frequent use of tropes, which you know change the nature of a known word, by applying it to some other signification; and this is it which Horace means in his epistle to the Pisos:

> 'Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum
> Reddiderit junctura novum'———

But I am sensible I have presumed too far to entertain you with a rude discourse of that art, which you both know so well, and put into practice with so much happiness. Yet before I leave Virgil, I must own the vanity to tell you, and by you the world, that he has been my master in this poem: I have followed him every where, I know not with what success, but I am sure with diligence enough: my images are many of them copied from him, and the rest are imitations of him. My expressions also are as near as the idioms of the two languages would admit of in translation. And this, sir, I have done with that boldness, for which I will stand accountable to any of our little critics, who, perhaps, are no better acquainted with him than I am. Upon your first perusal of this poem, you have taken notice of some words, which I have innovated (if it be too bold for me to say refined) upon his Latin; which, as I offer not to introduce into English prose, so I hope they are neither improper, nor altogether inelegant in verse; and, in this, Horace will again defend me.

> 'Et nova, fictaque nuper, habebunt verba fidem, si
> Græco fonte cadunt, parcè detorta'———

The inference is exceeding plain: for if a Roman poet might have liberty to coin a word, supposing only that it was derived from the Greek, was put into a Latin termination, and that he used this liberty but seldom, and with modesty; how much more justly may I challenge that privilege to do it

with the same prerequisites, from the best and most judicious of Latin writers? In some places, where either the fancy or the words were his, or any others, I have noted it in the margin, that I might not seem a plagiary; in others I have neglected it, to avoid as well tediousness, as the affectation of doing it too often. Such descriptions or images well wrought, which I promise not for mine, are, as I have said, the adequate delight of heroic poesy; for they beget admiration, which is its proper object; as the images of the burlesque, which is contrary to this, by the same reason beget laughter: for the one shows nature beautified, as in the picture of a fair woman, which we all admire; the other shows her deformed, as in that of a lazar, or of a fool with distorted face and antique gestures, at which we cannot forbear to laugh, because it is a deviation from nature. But though the same images serve equally for the Epic poesy, and for the Historic and Panegyric, which are branches of it, yet a several sort of sculpture is to be used in them. If some of them are to be like those of Juvenal, *Stantes in curribus Æmiliani*, heroes drawn in their triumphal chariots, and in their full proportion; others are to be like that of Virgil, *Spirantia mollius æra*: there is somewhat more of softness and tenderness to be shown in them. You will soon find I write not this without concern. Some, who have seen a paper of verses, which I wrote last year to her Highness the Duchess, have accused them of that only thing I could defend in them. They said, I did *humi serpere*, that I wanted not only height of fancy, but dignity of words, to set it off. I might well answer with that of Horace, *Nunc non erat his locus*; I knew I addressed them to a lady, and accordingly I affected the softness of expression, and the smoothness of measure, rather than the height of thought; and in what I did endeavour, it is no vanity to say I have succeeded. I detest arrogance; but there is some difference betwixt that and a just defence. But I will not farther bribe your candour or the reader's. I leave them to speak for me; and, if they can, to make out that character, not pretending to a greater, which I have given them.*

And now, sir, 'tis time I should relieve you from the tedious length of this account. You have better and more profitable employment for your hours, and I wrong the public to detain you longer. In conclusion, I must leave my poem

* See the preceding poem, which in the original edition of the *Annus Mirabilis* occurs in this place. *J. W.*

to you with all its faults, which I hope to find fewer in the printing by your emendations. I know you are not of the number of those, of whom the younger Pliny speaks; *Nec sunt parùm multi, qui carpere amicos suos judicium vocant:* I am rather too secure of you on that side. Your candour in pardoning my errors may make you more remiss in correcting them; if you will not withal consider that they come into the world with your approbation, and through your hands. I beg from you the greatest favour you can confer upon an absent person, since I repose upon your management what is dearest to me, my fame and reputation; and therefore I hope it will stir you up to make my poem fairer by many of your blots; if not, you know the story of the gamester who married the rich man's daughter, and when her father denied the portion, christened all her children by his surname, that if, in conclusion, they must beg, they should do so by one name, as well as by the other. But since the reproach of my faults will light on you, 'tis but reason I should do you that justice to the readers, to let them know, that if there be any thing tolerable in this poem, they owe the argument to your choice, the writing to your encouragement, the correction to your judgment, and the care of it to your friendship, to which he must ever acknowledge himself to owe all things, who is,

Sir,

The most obedient, and most
Faithful of your Servants,
JOHN DRYDEN.

From Charlton in Wiltshire,
Nov. 10, 1666.

ANNUS MIRABILIS,
THE YEAR OF WONDERS, 1666.

I.

In thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
Crouching at home and cruel when abroad:
Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own;
Our king they courted, and our merchants aw'd.

Trade, which like blood should circularly flow,
Stopp'd in their channels, found its freedom lost:
Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
And seem'd but shipwreck'd on so base a coast.

For them alone the heavens had kindly heat;
In eastern quarries ripening precious dew:
For them the Idumæan balm did sweat,
And in hot Ceilon spicy forests grew.

The sun but seem'd the labourer of their year;
Each waxing moon supplied her wat'ry store,
To swell those tides, which from the line did bear
Their brim-full vessels to the Belgian shore.

Thus, mighty in her ships, stood Carthage long,
And swept the riches of the world from far;

[10] *In eastern quarries*, &c.] Precious stones at first are dew, condensed and hardened by the warmth of the sun, or subterranean fires. *Orig. ed.* 1667.

[14] *Each waxing*, &c.] According to their opinion, who think that great heap of waters under the Line is depressed into tides by the moon, towards the Poles. *Orig. ed.*

Yet stoop'd to Rome, less wealthy, but more strong:
And this may prove our second Punic war.

What peace can be, where both to one pretend?
(But they more diligent, and we more strong)
Or if a peace, it soon must have an end;
For they would grow too powerful were it long.

Behold two nations then, engag'd so far,
That each seven years the fit must shake each land:
Where France will side to weaken us by war,
Who only can his vast designs withstand.

See how he feeds th' Iberian with delays,
To render us his timely friendship vain:
And while his secret soul on Flanders preys,
He rocks the cradle of the babe of Spain.

Such deep designs of empire does he lay
O'er them, whose cause he seems to take in hand;
And prudently would make them lords at sea,
To whom with ease he can give laws by land.

This saw our king; and long within his breast
His pensive counsels balanc'd to and fro:
He griev'd the land he freed should be oppress'd,
And he less for it than usurpers do.

His generous mind the fair ideas drew
Of fame and honour, which in dangers lay;
Where wealth, like fruit on precipices, grew,
Not to be gather'd but by birds of prey.

[29] *th' Iberian*] The Spaniard. *Orig. ed.*

The loss and gain each fatally were great;
And still his subjects call'd aloud for war;
But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,
Each others poise and counterbalance are.

He first survey'd the charge with careful eyes,
Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain;
Yet judg'd, like vapours that from limbecs rise,
It would in richer showers descend again.

At length resolv'd t' assert the wat'ry ball,
He in himself did whole Armadoes bring:
Him aged seamen might their master call,
And choose for general, were he not their king.

It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,
His awful summons they so soon obey;
So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows,
And so to pasture follow through the sea.

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.

59 *So hear the scaly herd*] The first edition erroneously has *here*. *T.*

59 *when Proteus blows*]

'——— Cœruleus Proteus immania ponti
Armenta, et magnas pascit sub gurgite phocas.' *Virg. Orig. ed.*

62 *Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies*] This line seems indebted to Sir P. Sidney's Astrophel and Stella:

'Phœbus drew wide the curtaines of the skies.' *T.*

64 *two glaring comets rise*] A comet was seen first on the

Whether they unctuous exhalations are,
Fir'd by the sun, or seeming so alone:
Or each some more remote and slippery star,
Which loses footing when to mortals shown.

Or one, that bright companion of the sun,
Whose glorious aspect seal'd our new-born king;
And now, a round of greater years begun,
New influence from his walks of light did bring.

Victorious York did first, with fam'd success,
To his known valour make the Dutch give place:
Thus Heaven our monarch's fortune did confess,
Beginning conquest from his royal race.

But since it was decreed, auspicious king,
In Britain's right that thou shouldst wed the main,
Heaven, as a gage, would cast some precious thing,
And therefore doom'd that Lawson should be slain.

14th of December, 1664, which lasted almost three months; and another the 6th of April, 1665, which was visible to us fourteen days. Appendix to Sherburn's Translation of Manilius, p. 211. *D.*

[71] *And now, a round of greater years begun*]
'Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.' *Virg.*
J. W.

[60] *And therefore doom'd*, &c.] Sir John Lawson was born at Hull of but mean parentage, and bred to the sea; he was for some time employed in the merchant's service, which he left for that of the Parliament, in which he soon got a ship, and afterwards carried a flag under Monk; with him he co-operated in the restoration of the king; for which good reason he received the honour of knighthood at the Hague. He zea-

Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate,
Whom sea-green Sirens from the rocks lament:
Thus as an offering for the Grecian state,
He first was kill'd who first to battle went.

Their chief blown up in air, not waves, expir'd, 85
To which his pride presum'd to give the law:
The Dutch confess'd Heaven present, and retir'd,
And all was Britain the wide ocean saw.

To nearest ports their shatter'd ships repair,
Where by our dreadful cannon they lay aw'd;
So reverently men quit the open air,
Where thunder speaks the angry gods abroad.

*And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the rising sun: 94
And precious sand from southern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.

Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,
Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coasts they bring:

lously supported our claim to the sovereignty of the sea, and quarrelled with De Ruyter, the Dutch admiral, for being backward in acknowledging it, an accident that partly occasioned the Dutch war. In the action here celebrated he was rear-admiral of the red, and acted immediately under his Royal Highness. His death was occasioned by a musket-ball, that wounded him in the knee, and he was not taken proper care of. We find him characterised honest, brave, loyal, and one of the most experienced seamen of his time. *D.*

85 *Their chief*] The admiral of Holland. *Orig. ed.*

94 The attempt at Berghen. *Orig. ed.*

95 *southern climates*] Guinea. *Orig. ed.*

There first the North's cold bosom spices bore,
And winter brooded on the eastern spring.

By the rich scent we found our perfum'd prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did close in covert lie;
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The English undertake th' unequal war:
Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those:
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy:
And to such height their frantic passion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to destroy.

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd against them fly:
Some preciously by shatter'd porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die.

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,
In heaven's inclemency some ease we find:
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

Nor wholly lost we so deserv'd a prey;
For storms, repenting, part of it restor'd:
Which as a tribute from the Baltick sea,
The British ocean sent her mighty lord.

Go, mortals, now, and vex yourselves in vain
For wealth, which so uncertainly must come:
When what was brought so far, and with such pain,
Was only kept to lose it nearer home.

The son, who twice three months on th' ocean tost,
Prepar'd to tell what he had pass'd before,
Now sees in English ships the Holland coast,
And parents' arms, in vain, stretch'd from the shore.

This careful husband had been long away,
Whom his chaste wife and little children mourn;
Who on their fingers learn'd to tell the day
On which their father promis'd to return.

Such are the proud designs of human-kind,
And so we suffer shipwreck every where!
Alas! what port can such a pilot find,
Who in the night of fate must blindly steer!

The undistinguish'd seeds of good and ill,
Heaven, in his bosom, from our knowledge hides:
And draws them in contempt of human skill,
Which oft for friends mistaken foes provides.

Let Munster's prelate ever be accurst,

137 *Such are*, &c.] From Petronius. Si bene calculum ponas, ubique fit naufragium. *Orig. ed.*

141 *The undistinguish'd seeds of good and ill*]

Prudens futuri temporis, exitum
Caliginosâ nocte premit deus. *J. W.*

145 *Let Munster's prelate*, &c.] The famous Bernard Vanghalen, bishop of Munster, excited by Charles, marched

In whom we seek the German faith in vain:
Alas! that he should teach the English first,
That fraud and avarice in the church could reign!

Happy, who never trust a stranger's will,
Whose friendship's in his interest understood!
Since money given but tempts him to be ill,
When power is too remote to make him good.

Till now, alone the mighty nations strove;
The rest at gaze, without the lists did stand:
And threat'ning France, plac'd like a painted Jove,
Kept idle thunder in his lifted hand.

That eunuch guardian of rich Holland's trade,
Who envies us what he wants power t' enjoy;
What noiseful valour does no foe invade,
And weak assistance will his friends destroy.

* Offended that we fought without his leave,
He takes this time his secret hate to show:
Which Charles does with a mind so calm receive,
As one that neither seeks nor shuns his foe.

With France, to aid the Dutch, the Danes unite:
France as their tyrant, Denmark as their slave.

twenty thousand men into the province of Overyssell, under the dominion of the republic of Holland, where he committed great outrages, acting rather like a captain of banditti than the leader of an army. *D.*

146 *the German faith*] Tacitus saith of them, Nullos mortalium fide aut armis ante Germanos esse. *Orig. ed.*

* War declared by France. *Orig. ed.*

But when with one three nations join to fight,
They silently confess that one more brave.

Lewis had chas'd the English from his shore;
But Charles the French as subjects does invite:
Would heaven for each some Solomon restore,
Who, by their mercy, may decide their right!

Were subjects so but only by their choice,
And not from birth did forc'd dominion take,
Our prince alone would have the public voice;
And all his neighbours' realms would deserts make.

He without fear a dangerous war pursues,
Which without rashness he began before:
As honour made him first the danger choose,
So still he makes it good on virtue's score.

The doubled charge his subjects' love supplies,
Who, in that bounty, to themselves are kind:
So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise,
And in his plenty their abundance find.

* With equal power he does two chiefs create,
Two such as each seem'd worthiest when alone;
Each able to sustain a nation's fate,
Since both had found a greater in their own.

Both great in courage, conduct, and in fame,
Yet neither envious of the other's praise;

* Prince Rupert and Duke of Albemarle, sent to sea. *Orig. ed.*

Their duty, faith, and int'rest too the same,
Like mighty partners equally they raise.

The prince long time had courted fortune's love,
But once possess'd did absolutely reign:
Thus with their Amazons the heroes strove,
And conquer'd first those beauties they would gain.

The duke beheld, like Scipio, with disdain,
That Carthage, which he ruin'd, rise once more;
And shook aloft the fasces of the main,
To fright those slaves with what they felt before.

Together to the wat'ry camp they haste,
Whom matrons passing to their children show:
Infants' first vows for them to heaven are cast,
And future people bless them as they go.

With them no riotous pomp, nor Asian train,
T' infect a navy with their gawdy fears;
To make slow fights, and victories but vain:
But war, severely, like itself, appears.

Diffusive of themselves, where'er they pass,
They make that warmth in others they expect;
Their valour works like bodies on a glass,
And does its image on their men project.

[204] *future people*] *Examina infantium futurusque populus.* Plin. Jun. in Pan. ad Traj. *Orig. ed.*

[205] *With them no riotous pomp*] Dryden follows his great master, Milton, in making *riotous* only two syllables.—Again, in st. 59, *elephant* is contracted in like manner. Other examples of this kind occur. T.

*Our fleet divides, and straight the Dutch appear,
In number, and a fam'd commander, bold:
The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear,
Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold.

The Duke, less numerous, but in courage more,
On wings of all the winds to combat flies:
His murdering guns a loud defiance roar,
And bloody crosses on his flag-staffs rise.

Both furl their sails, and strip them for the fight,
Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air:
Th' Elean plains could boast no nobler sight,
When struggling champions did their bodies bare.

Born each by other in a distant line,
The sea-built forts in dreadful order move:
So vast the noise, as if not fleets did join,
But lands unfix'd, and floating nations strove.

Now pass'd, on either side they nimbly tack;
Both strive to intercept and guide the wind:
And, in its eye, more closely they come back,
To finish all the deaths they left behind.

On high-rais'd decks the haughty Belgians ride,
Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go:

* Duke of Albemarle's battle, first day. *Orig. ed.*

223 *Th' Elean*, &c.] Where the Olympic games were celebrated. *Orig. ed.*

228 *lands unfix'd*] From Virgil:

'——— Credas innare révulsas
Cycladas,' &c. *Orig. ed.*

Such port the elephant bears, and so defied
By the rhinoceros her unequal foe.

And as the built, so different is the fight;
Their mounting shot is on our sails design'd:
Deep in their hulls our deadly bullets light,
And through the yielding planks a passage find.

Our dreaded admiral from far they threat,
Whose batter'd rigging their whole war receives:
All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,
He stands, and sees below his scatter'd leaves.

Heroes of old, when wounded, shelter sought;
But he, who meets all danger with disdain,
E'en in their face his ship to anchor brought,
And steeple-high stood propt upon the main.

At this excess of courage, all amaz'd,
The foremost of his foes awhile withdraw:
With such respect in enter'd Rome they gaz'd,
Who on high chairs the god-like fathers saw.

And now, as where Patroclus' body lay,
Here Trojan chiefs advanc'd, and there the Greek;
Ours o'er the Duke their pious wings display,
And theirs the noblest spoils of Britain seek.

Meantime his busy mariners he hastes,
His shatter'd sails with rigging to restore;
And willing pines ascend his broken masts,
Whose lofty heads rise higher than before.

Straight to the Dutch he turns his dreadful prow,
More fierce th' important quarrel to decide:
Like swans, in long array his vessels show,
Whose crests advancing do the waves divide.

They charge, recharge, and all along the sea
They drive, and squander the huge Belgian fleet.
Berkley alone, who nearest danger lay,
Did a like fate with lost Crëusa meet.

The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they asham'd to leave:
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.

In th' English fleet each ship resounds with joy,
And loud applause of their great leader's fame:
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
And, slumb'ring, smile at the imagin'd flame.

Not so the Holland fleet, who, tired and done,
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie:

267 *Berkley alone*, &c.] Among other remarkable passages in this engagement, the undaunted resolution of vice-admiral Berkley was particularly admired. He had many men killed on board him, and though no longer able to make resistance, yet would obstinately continue the fight, refusing quarter to the last. Being at length shot in the throat with a musket-ball, he retired to his cabin, where, stretching himself on a great table, he expired; and in that posture did the enemy, who afterwards took the ship, find the body covered with blood. *D.*

Faint sweats all down their mighty members run;
Vast bulks which little souls but ill supply.

In dreams they fearful precipices tread:
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore:
Or in dark churches walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.

*The morn they look on with unwilling eyes,
Till from their maintop joyful news they hear
Of ships, which by their mould bring new supplies,
And in their colours Belgian lions bear.

Our watchful general had discern'd from far
This mighty succour, which made glad the foe:
He sigh'd, but, like a father of the war,
His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow.

His wounded men he first sends off to shore,
Never, till now, unwilling to obey:
They not their wounds, but want of strength deplore,
And think them happy who with him can stay.

Then to the rest, Rejoice, said he, to-day;
In you the fortune of Great Britain lies:

280 *Vast bulks which little souls but ill supply*] So Milton, in the spirited speech which he gives to Samson as an answer to the cowardly language of the giant Harapha, *Sam. Agon.* ver. 1237:

Go, baffled coward! lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, *bulk without spirit vast*,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low, &c. *T.*

* Second day's battle. *Orig. ed.*

Among so brave a people, you are they
Whom heaven has chose to fight for such a prize.

If number English courages could quell,
We should at first have shunn'd, not met, our foes:
Whose numerous sails the fearful only tell:
Courage from hearts, and not from numbers, grows.

He said, nor needed more to say: with haste
To their known stations cheerfully they go;
And all at once, disdaining to be last,
Solicit every gale to meet the foe.

Nor did th' encourag'd Belgians long delay,
But bold in others, not themselves, they stood:
So thick, our navy scarce could steer their way,
But seem'd to wander in a moving wood.

Our little fleet was now engag'd so far,
That, like the sword-fish in the whale, they fought:
The combat only seem'd a civil war,
Till through their bowels we our passage wrought.

Never had valour, no not ours, before
Done ought like this upon the land or main,
Where not to be o'ercome was to do more
Than all the conquests former kings did gain

The mighty ghosts of our great Harries rose,
And armed Edwards look'd with anxious eyes,
To see this fleet among unequal foes,
By which fate promis'd them their Charles should [rise.

Meantime the Belgians tack upon our rear,
And raking chace-guns through our sterns they send:
Close by, their fire-ships, like jackals, appear,
Who on their lions for the prey attend.

Silent in smoke of cannon they come on:
Such vapours once did fiery Cacus hide:
In these the height of pleas'd revenge is shown,
Who burn contented by another's side.

Sometimes from fighting squadrons of each fleet,
Deceiv'd themselves, or to preserve some friend,
Two grappling Ætnas on the ocean meet,
And English fires with Belgian flames contend.

Now, at each tack, our little fleet grows less;
And, like maim'd fowl, swim lagging on the main;
Their greater loss their numbers scarce confess,
While they lose cheaper than the English gain.

Have you not seen, when, whistled from the fist,
Some falcon stoops at what her eye design'd,
And, with her eagerness the quarry miss'd,
Straight flies at check, and clips it down the wind?

The dastard crow that to the wood made wing,
And sees the groves no shelter can afford,
With her loud caws her craven kind does bring,
Who, safe in numbers, cuff the noble bird.

Among the Dutch thus Albemarle did fare:
He could not conquer, and disdain'd to fly;

Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
Like falling Cæsar, decently to die.

Yet pity did his manly spirit move,
To see those perish who so well had fought;
And generously with his despair he strove,
Resolv'd to live till he their safety wrought.

Let other muses write his prosperous fate,
Of conquer'd nations tell, and kings restor'd:
But mine shall sing of his eclips'd estate,
Which, like the sun's, more wonders does afford.

He drew his mighty frigates all before,
On which the foe his fruitless force employs:
His weak ones deep into his rear he bore
Remote from guns, as sick men from the noise.

His fiery cannon did their passage guide,
And following smoke obscur'd them from the foe:
Thus Israel safe from the Egyptian's pride,
By flaming pillars, and by clouds, did go.

Elsewhere the Belgian force we did defeat,
But here our courages did theirs subdue;
So Xenophon once led that fam'd retreat,
Which first the Asian empire overthrew.

The foe approach'd, and one for his bold sin
Was sunk; as he that touch'd the ark was slain:
The wild waves master'd him and suck'd him in,
And smiling eddies dimpled on the main.

This seen, the rest at awful distance stood;
As if they had been there as servants set
To stay, or to go on, as he thought good,
And not pursue but wait on his retreat.

So Libyan huntsmen, on some sandy plain,
From shady coverts rous'd, the lion chase:
The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,
And slowly moves, unknowing to give place.

But if some one approach to dare his force,
He swings his tail, and swiftly turns him round;
With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,
And with the other tears him to the ground.

Amidst these toils succeeds the balmy night;
Now hissing waters the quench'd guns restore;

384 *And slowly moves*] The simile is Virgil's:

'———— Vestigia retro
Improperata refert,' &c. *Orig. ed.*

386 *He swings his tail*] The metre of this line, perhaps, introduced *swings* instead of the more emphatic word *swinges*, applied to a lion enraged by Chapman, in his Cæs. and Pompey, 1607:

'And then his sides he *swinges* with his *sterne*.'

And by Sylvester, Du Bart. p. 205, 4to. ed.

'Then often *swinging* with his sinewie traine,' &c.

Milton, in a line of admirable effect, has applied the word to the old dragon, who,

'Wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.'
Ode Nativ. st. 18.

Waller also describes the '*tail's* impetuous *swinge*' of the whale, Batt. Summ. Isl. c. iii. *T.*

And weary waves, withdrawing from the fight,
Lie lull'd and panting on the silent shore.

The moon shone clear on the becalmed flood,
Where whi'e her beams like glittering silver play,
Upon the beck our careful general stood,
And deeply mus'd on the succeeding day.

That happy sun, said he, will rise again,
Who twice victorious did our navy see:
And I alone must view him rise in vain,
Without one ray of all his star for me.

Yet like an English general will I die,
And all the ocean make my spacious grave:
Women and cowards on the land may lie,
The sea's a tomb that's proper for the brave.

Restless he pass'd the remnants of the night,
Till the fresh air proclaim'd the morning nigh:

391 *weary waves*] From Statius Sylv.

'Nec trucibus fluviis idem sonus: occidit horror
Æquoris, antennis maria acclinata quiescunt.'

Orig. ed.

396 *succeeding day*] The 3rd of June, famous for two former victories. *Orig. ed.*

401 *Yet like an English general will I die,*
And all the ocean make my spacious grave:
Women and cowards on the land may lie,
The sea's a tomb that's proper for the brave]

This speech contains nearly the same words that the Duke of Albemarle spoke in a council the evening before the battle, in which he fought with amazing intrepidity, and all that determined resignation here implied. *D.*

And burning ships, the martyrs of the fight,
With paler fires beheld the eastern sky.

*But now, his stores of ammunition spent,
His naked valour is his only guard;
Rare thunders are from his dumb cannon sent,
And solitary guns are scarcely heard.

Thus far had fortune power, here forc'd to stay,
Nor longer durst with virtue be at strife:
This, as a ransom, Albemarle did pay
For all the glories of so great a life.

For now brave Rupert from afar appears,
Whose waving streamers the glad general knows:
With full spread sails his eager navy steers,
And every ship in swift proportion grows.

The anxious prince had heard the cannon long,
And from that length of time dire omens drew
Of English overmatch'd, and Dutch too strong,
Who never fought three days, but to pursue.

Then, as an eagle, who with pious care
Was beating widely on the wing for prey,
To her now silent eyry does repair,
And finds her callow infants forc'd away.

Stung with her love, she stoops upon the plain,
The broken air loud whistling as she flies:
She stops and listens, and shoots forth again,
And guides her pinions by her young ones' cries.

* Third day. *Orig. ed.*

With such kind passion hastes the prince to fight,
And spreads his flying canvass to the sound;
Him, whom no danger, were he there, could fright,
Now, absent, every little noise can wound.

As in a drought the thirsty creatures cry,
And gape upon the gather'd clouds for rain;
And first the martlet meets it in the sky,
And with wet wings joys all the feather'd train.

With such glad hearts did our despairing men
Salute the appearance of the prince's fleet;
And each ambitiously would claim the ken,
That with first eyes did distant safety meet.

The Dutch, who came like greedy hinds before,
To reap the harvest their ripe ears did yield;
Now look like those, when rolling thunders roar,
And sheets of lightning blast the standing field.

Full in the prince's passage, hills of sand
And dangerous flats in secret ambush lay,
Where the false tides skim o'er the cover'd land,
And seamen with dissembled depths betray.

The wily Dutch, who, like fallen angels, fear'd
This new Messiah's coming, there did wait,
And round the verge their braving vessels steer'd,
To tempt his courage with so fair a bait.

But he, unmov'd, contemns their idle threat,
Secure of fame whene'er he please to fight:
His cold experience tempers all his heat,
And inbred worth does boasting valour slight.

Heroic virtue did his actions guide,
And he the substance not th' appearance chose;
To rescue one such friend he took more pride,
Than to destroy whole thousands of such foes.

But when approach'd, in strict embraces bound,
Rupert and Albemarle together grow;
He joys to have his friend in safety found,
Which he to none but to that friend would owe.

The cheerful soldiers, with new stores supplied,
Now long to execute their spleenful will;
And, in revenge for those three days they tried,
Wish one, like Joshua's, when the sun stood still.

*Thus reinforc'd, against the adverse fleet,
Still doubling ours, brave Rupert leads the way:
With the first blushes of the morn they meet,
And bring night back upon the new-born day.

His presence soon blows up the kindling fight,
And his loud guns speak thick like angry men:
It seem'd as slaughter had been breath'd all night,
And death new pointed his dull dart again.

The Dutch too well his mighty conduct knew,
And matchless courage, since the former fight:
Whose navy like a stiff-stretch'd cord did show,
Till he bore in and bent them into flight.

The wind he shares, while half their fleet offends
His open side, and high above him shows:

* Fourth day's battle. *Orig. ed.*

Upon the rest at pleasure he descends
And doubly harm'd he double harms bestows.

Behind, the general mends his weary pace
And sullenly to his revenge he sails:
So glides some trodden serpent on the grass,
And long behind his wounded volume trails.

The increasing sound is borne to either shore,
And for their stakes the throwing nations fear:
Their passions double with the cannons' roar,
And with warm wishes each man combats there.

Ply'd thick and close as when the fight begun,
Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away;
So sicken waning moons too near the sun,
And blunt their crescents on the edge of day.

And now reduc'd on equal terms to fight,
Their ships like wasted patrimonies show;
Where the thin scattering trees admit the light,
And shun each others shadows as they grow.

The warlike prince had sever'd from the rest
Two giant ships, the pride of all the main;
Which with his one so vigorously he press'd,
And flew so home they could not rise again.

Already batter'd, by his lee they lay,
In vain upon the passing winds they call:
The passing winds through their torn canvass play,
And flagging sails on heartless sailors fall.

Their open'd sides receive a gloomy light,
Dreadful as day let in to shades below;
Without, grim death rides barefac'd in their sight,
And urges entering billows as they flow.

When one dire shot, the last they could supply,
Close by the board the prince's mainmast bore:
All three now helpless by each other lie,
And this offends not, and those fear no more.

So have I seen some fearful hare maintain
A course, till tir'd before the dog she lay:
Who, stretch'd behind her, pants upon the plain,
Past power to kill, as she to get away.

With his loll'd tongue he faintly licks his prey;
His warm breath blows her flix up as she lies;
She, trembling, creeps upon the ground away,
And looks back to him with beseeching eyes.

The prince unjustly does his stars accuse,
Which hinder'd him to push his fortune on;
For what they to his courage did refuse,
By mortal valour never must be done.

This lucky hour the wise Batavian takes,
And warns his tatter'd fleet to follow home:
Proud to have so got off with equal stakes,
Where 'twas a triumph not to be o'ercome.

536 *a triumph not to be o'ercome*] From Horace:

——— 'quos opimus
Fallere et effugere est triumphus.' *Orig. ed.*

The general's force, as kept alive by fight,
Now, not oppos'd, no longer can pursue:
Lasting till heaven had done his courage right;
When he had conquer'd he his weakness knew.

He casts a frown on the departing foe,
And sighs to see him quit the watery field:
His stern fix'd eyes no satisfaction show,
For all the glories which the fight did yield.

Though, as when fiends did miracles avow,
He stands confess'd e'en by the boastful Dutch;
He only does his conquest disavow,
And thinks too little what they found too much.

Return'd, he with the fleet resolv'd to stay;
No tender thoughts of home his heart divide;
Domestic joys and cares he puts away;
For realms are households which the great must guide.

As those who unripe veins in mines explore,
On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,
Till time digests the yet imperfect ore,
And know it will be gold another day:

So looks our monarch on this early fight,
Th' essay and rudiments of great success:
Which all-maturing time must bring to light,
While he, like heaven, does each day's labour bless.

Heaven ended not the first or second day,
Yet each was perfect to the work design'd:
God and kings work, when they their work survey,
A passive aptness in all subjects find.

* In burden'd vessels first, with speedy care,
His plenteous stores do season'd timber send:
Thither the brawny carpenters repair,
And as the surgeons of maim'd ships attend.

With cord and canvass from rich Hamburgh sent,
His navies molted wings he imps once more;
Tall Norway fir, their masts in battle spent,
And English oak, sprung leaks and planks, restore.

All hands employ'd the royal work grows warm:
Like labouring bees on a long summer's day,
Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm,
And some on bells of tasted lilies play.

With glewy wax some new foundation lay
Of virgin combs, which from the roof are hung:
Some arm'd within doors upon duty stay,
Or tend the sick, or educate the young.

So here some pick out bullets from the sides,
Some drive old okum through each seam and rift:
Their left hand does the calking-iron guide,
The rattling mallet with the right they lift.

With boiling pitch another near at hand,
From friendly Sweden brought, the seams instops:

* His majesty repairs the fleet. *Orig. ed.*

570 *wings he imps*] See Mr. Warton's note on Milton's 15th Sonnet, 'to *imp* their serpent-*wings*:' where he observes that the expression occurs in poets much later than Milton. The latest, whom I have hitherto found using this old poetical expression, is Shadwell, by whom it is employed towards the end of his *Isabella*. *T.*

Which well paid o'er, the salt sea waves withstand,
And shakes them from the rising beak in drops.

Some the gall'd ropes with dawby marling bind,
Or searcloth masts with strong tarpawling coats:
To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind,
And one, below, their ease or stiffness notes.

Our careful monarch stands in person by,
His new-cast cannons' firmness to explore:
The strength of big-corn'd powder loves to try,
And ball and cartrage sorts for every bore.

Each day brings fresh supplies of arms and men,
And ships which all last winter were abroad;
And such as fitted since the fight had been,
Or new from stocks were fall'n into the road.

The goodly London in her gallant trim,
(The phœnix, daughter of the vanish'd old),
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.

Her flag aloft spread ruffling to the wind,
And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire:
The weaver charm'd with what his loom design'd,
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves:
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.

This martial present, piously design'd,
The loyal city give their best-lov'd king:
And, with a bounty ample as the wind,
Built, fitted, and maintain'd, to aid him bring.

By viewing nature, nature's handmaid, art
Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow:
Thus fishes first to shipping did impart,
Their tail the rudder, and their head the prow.

Some log perhaps upon the waters swam,
A useless drift, which rudely cut within,
And, hollow'd, first a floating trough became,
And cross some rivulet passage did begin.

In shipping such as this, the Irish kern,
And untaught Indian, on the stream did glide:
Ere sharp-keel'd boats to stem the flood did learn,
Or fin-like oars did spread from either side.

Add but a sail, and Saturn so appear'd,
When from lost empire he to exile went,
And with the golden age to Tyber steer'd,
Where coin and first commerce he did invent.

Rude as their ships was navigation then;
No useful compass or meridian known;
Coasting, they kept the land within their ken,
And knew no North but when the Pole-star shone.

Of all who since have used the open sea,
Than the bold English none more fame have won:

Beyond the year, and out of heaven's high way,
They make discoveries where they see no sun.

But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,
By poor mankind's benighted wit is sought,
Shall in this age to Britain first be shown,
And hence be to admiring nations taught.

The ebbs of tides and their mysterious flow,
We, as arts' elements, shall understand,
And as by line upon the ocean go,
Whose paths shall be familiar as the land.

Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,*
By which remotest regions are allied;
Which makes one city of the universe;
Where some may gain, and all may be supplied.

Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go,
And view the ocean leaning on the sky:
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,
And on the lunar world securely pry.

This I foretell from your auspicious care,†
Who great in search of God and nature grow;

* By a more exact knowledge of longitudes. *Orig. ed.*

† Apostrophe to the Royal Society. *Orig. ed.*

638 *great in search*] Alludes to the Royal Society. *Dr. J. W.*

Who best your wise Creator's praise declare,
Since best to praise his works is best to know.

O truly royal! who behold the law
And rule of beings in your Maker's mind:
And thence, like limbecs, rich ideas draw,
To fit the levell'd use of human-kind.

But first the toils of war we must endure,
And from the injurious Dutch redeem the seas.
War makes the valiant of his right secure,
And gives up fraud to be chastis'd with ease.

Already were the Belgians on our coast,
Whose fleet more mighty every day became
By late success, which they did falsely boast,
And now by first appearing seem'd to claim.

Designing, subtle, diligent, and close,
They knew to manage war with wise delay:
Yet all those arts their vanity did cross,
And by their pride their prudence did betray.

Nor staid the English long; but well supplied,
Appear as numerous as th' insulting foe:
The combat now by courage must be tried,
And the success the braver nation show.

There was the Plymouth squadron now come in,
Which in the Straits last winter was abroad;
Which twice on Biscay's working bay had been,
And on the midland sea the French had aw'd.

Old expert Allen, loyal all along,
Fam'd for his action on the Smyrna fleet:
And Holmes, whose name shall live in epic song,
While music numbers, or while verse has feet.

Holmes, the Achates of the general's fight;
Who first bewitch'd our eyes with Guinea gold:
As once old Cato in the Roman sight
The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold.

With him went Sprag, as bountiful as brave,
Whom his high courage to command had brought:
Harman, who did the twice-fir'd Harry save,
And in his burning ship undaunted fought.

Young Hollis on a muse by Mars begot,
Born, Cæsar-like, to write and act great deeds:

686 *Old expert Allen*, &c.] Sir Thomas Allen was admiral of the white. *D.*

690 *Holmes, the Achates of the*, &c.] Sir Robert Holmes was rear-admiral of the white, called the Achates from his eagerness to support the general. Achates was the faithful companion of Æneas. For an illustration of the two last lines of this stanza, see our notes to the Satire on the Dutch. *D.*

694 *With him went Sprag*, &c.] Sir Edward Sprag served under Sir Jeremiah Smith, who carried the blue flag: he was drowned passing from one ship to another, in a fight with Van Tromp, on the eleventh of August, 1672, bearing the character of a gallant officer, and an accomplished gentleman. *D.*

695 *his high courage*] The *courage haut* of Spenser and our elder poets, which Dryden no doubt had in mind. *T.*

Impatient to revenge his fatal shot,
His right hand doubly to his left succeeds.

Thousands were there in darker fame that dwell,
Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn:
And though to me unknown, they sure fought well,
Whom Rupert led, and who were British born.

Of every size a hundred fighting sail,
So vast the navy now at anchor rides,
That underneath it the press'd waters fail,
And with its weight it shoulders off the tides.

Now, anchors weigh'd, the seamen shout so shrill,
That heaven, and earth, and the wide ocean rings:
A breeze from westward waits their sails to fill,
And rests in those high beds his downy wings.

The wary Dutch this gathering storm foresaw,
And durst not bide it on the English coast:
Behind their treacherous shallows they withdraw,
And there lay snares to catch the British host.

So the false spider, when her nets are spread,
Deep ambush'd in her silent den does lie:
And feels far off the trembling of her thread,
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly.

Then if at last she find him fast beset,
She issues forth, and runs along her loom:
She joys to touch the captive in her net,
And drag the little wretch in triumph home.

The Belgians hop'd that, with disorder'd haste,
Our deep-cut keels upon the sands might run:
Or, if with caution leisurely were past,
Their numerous gross might charge us one by one.

But with a fore-wind pushing them above,
And swelling tide that heav'd them from below,
O'er the blind flats our warlike squadrons move,
And with spread sails to welcome battle go.

It seem'd as there the British Neptune stood,
With all his hosts of waters at command,
Beneath them to submit th' officious flood;
And with his trident shov'd them off the sand.

To the pale foes they suddenly draw near,
And summon them to unexpected fight;
They start like murderers when ghosts appear,
And draw their curtains in the dead of night.

Now van to van the foremost squadrons meet,*
The midmost battles hasting up behind:
Who view far off the storm of falling sleet,
And hear their thunder rattling in the wind.

At length the adverse admirals appear;
The two bold champions of each country's right:
Their eyes describe the lists as they come near,
And draw the lines of death before they fight.

* Second battle. *Orig. ed.*

The distance judg'd for shot of every size,
The linstocks touch, the ponderous ball expires:
The vigorous seaman every porthole plies,
And adds his heart to every gun he fires!

Fierce was the fight on the proud Belgians' side,
For honour, which they seldom sought before:
But now they by their own vain boasts were tied,
And forc'd, at least in show to prize it more.

But sharp remembrance on the English part,
And shame of being match'd by such a foe,
Rouse conscious virtue up in every heart,
And seeming to be stronger makes them so.

Nor long the Belgians could that fleet sustain,
Which did two generals' fates, and Cæsar's bear:
Each several ship a victory did gain,
As Rupert or as Albemarle were there.

Their batter'd Admiral too soon withdrew,
Unthank'd by ours for his unfinish'd fight:
But he the minds of his Dutch masters knew,
Who call'd that providence which we call'd flight.

Never did men more joyfully obey,
Or sooner understood the sign to fly:
With such alacrity they bore away,
As if to praise them all the States stood by.

761 *And seeming to be stronger makes them so*]
'Possunt, quia posse videntur.' *Virg.*
Orig. ed.

O famous leader of the Belgian fleet,
Thy monument inscribed such praise shall wear,
As Varro timely flying once did meet,
Because he did not of his Rome despair.

Behold that navy, which a while before
Provok'd the tardy English to the fight;
Now draw their beaten vessels close to shore,
As larks lie dar'd to shun the hobbies flight.

Whoe'er would English monuments survey,
In other records may our courage know:
But let them hide the story of this day,
Whose fame was blemish'd by too base a foe.

Or if too busily they will inquire
Into a victory which we disdain;
Then let them know, the Belgians did retire
Before the patron saint of injur'd Spain.

788 ——— *the Belgians did retire*
Before the patron saint of injur'd Spain]

The victory was completed on the twenty-fifth day of July, a day sacred to St. James the Great, patron of Spain, which nation our author calls injur'd, inasmuch as the Hollanders had rebelled against King Philip II. being aided by Queen Elizabeth: and the next stanza refers to this transaction, for which the poet supposes us now to have atoned. The monarchy mentioned in the 199th stanza is Spain, with which Queen Elizabeth had been long at variance, when, in our author's opinion, we overlooked the growing power of France and Holland, which merited much more our attention. *D.*

789 *patron saint*] St. James, on whose day this victory was gained. *Orig. ed.*

Repenting England this revengeful day
To Philip's manes did an offering bring:
England, which first, by leading them astray,
Hatch'd up rebellion to destroy her king.

Our fathers bent their baneful industry,
To check a monarchy that slowly grew;
But did not France or Holland's fate foresee,
Whose rising power to swift dominion flew.

In fortune's empire blindly thus we go,
And wander after pathless destiny;
Whose dark resorts since prudence cannot know,
In vain it would provide for what shall be.

But whate'er English to the bless'd shall go,
And the fourth Harry or first Orange meet;
Find him disowning of a Bourbon foe,
And him detesting a Batavian fleet.

Now on their coasts our conquering navy rides,
Waylays their merchants, and their land besets;
Each day new wealth without their care provides;
They lie asleep with prizes in their nets.

So, close behind some promontory lie
The huge leviathans to attend their prey;
And give no chase, but swallow in the fry,
Which through their gaping jaws mistake the way.

791 *Philip's manes*] Philip the Second, of Spain, against whom the Hollanders rebelling, were aided by Queen Elizabeth. *Orig. ed.*

* Nor was this all; in ports and roads remote,
Destructive fires among whole fleets we send;
Triumphant flames upon the water float,
And out-bound ships at home their voyage end.

Those various squadrons, variously design'd,
Each vessel freighted with a several load,
Each squadron waiting for a several wind,
All find but one, to burn them in the road.

Some bound for Guiney, golden sand to find,
Bore all the gawds the simple natives wear:
Some, for the pride of Turkish courts design'd,
For folded turbans finest Holland bear.

Some English wool, vex'd in a Belgian loom,
And into cloth of spungy softness made,
Did into France or colder Denmark doom,
To ruin with worse ware our staple trade.

Our greedy seamen rummage every hold,
Smile on the booty of each wealthier chest;
And, as the priests who with their gods make bold,
Take what they like, and sacrifice the rest.

† But ah; how insincere are all our joys! [stay:
Which, sent from heaven, like lightning make no
Their palling taste the journey's length destroys,
Or grief, sent post, o'ertakes them on the way.

* Burning of the fleet in the Vly, by Sir Robert Holmes. *Orig. ed.*

† Transitum to the fire of London. *Orig. ed.*

837 *Or grief, sent post*, &c.] It is the same sentiment in Milton's Samson Agonistes, ver. 1538:

Swell'd with our late successes on the foe,
Which France and Holland wanted power to cross,
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low,
And feed their envious eyes with English loss.

Each element his dread command obeys,
Who makes or ruins with a smile or frown;
Who, as by one he did our nation raise,
So now he with another pulls us down.

Yet London, empress of the northern clime,
By a high fate thou greatly didst expire:
Great as the world's, which, at the death of time
Must fall, and rise a nobler frame by fire!

As when some dire usurper heaven provides,
To scourge his country with a lawless sway;
His birth perhaps some petty village hides,
And sets his cradle out of fortune's way.

Till fully ripe his swelling fate breaks out,
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on:
His prince surpris'd at first no ill could doubt,
And wants the power to meet it when 'tis known.

'For evil news rides post, while good news bates.' Milton's however is the closer imitation of Statius, as I have elsewhere observed:

'Spargitur in turmas solito pernicior index
Cùm lugenda refert.' *T.*

848 *Great as the world's, which, at the death of time*
Must fall, and rise a nobler frame by fire]

'Quum mare, quum tellus, correptaque regia cœli,
Ardeat,' &c. *Ovid. Orig. ed.*

Such was the rise of this prodigious fire,
Which, in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
From thence did soon to open streets aspire,
And straight to palaces and temples spread.

The diligence of trades and noiseful gain,
And luxury more late, asleep were laid:
All was the night's; and in her silent reign
No sound the rest of nature did invade.

In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,
Those seeds of fire their fatal birth disclose;
And first few scattering sparks about were blown,
Big with the flames that to our ruin rose.

Then in some close-pent room it crept along,
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed;
Till th' infant monster, with devouring strong,
Walk'd boldly upright with exalted head.

Now like some rich or mighty murderer,
Too great for prison, which he breaks with gold;
Who fresher for new mischiefs does appear,
And dares the world to tax him with the old.

So scapes th' insulting fire his narrow jail,
And makes small outlets into open air:
There the fierce winds his tender force assail,
And beat him downward to his first repair.

The winds, like crafty courtezans, withheld
His flames from burning, but to blow them more:

882 *like crafty*, &c.] Hæc arte tractabat cupidum virum, ut illius animum inopia accenderet. *Orig. ed.*

And every fresh attempt he is repell'd
With faint denials weaker than before.

And now, no longer letted of his prey,
He leaps up at it with enrag'd desire:
O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,
And nods at every house his threatening fire.

The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend,
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice:
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

Our guardian angel saw them where they sate
Above the palace of our slumbering king:
He sigh'd, abandoning his charge to fate,
And, drooping, oft look'd back upon the wing.

At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze
Call'd up some waking lover to the sight;
And long it was ere he the rest could raise,
Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night.

The next to danger, hot pursu'd by fate,
Half-cloth'd, half-naked, hastily retire:
And frighted mothers strike their breasts too late,
For helpless infants left amidst the fire.

Their cries soon waken all the dwellers near;
Now murmuring noises rise in every street;
The more remote run stumbling with their fear,
And in the dark men justle as they meet.

So weary bees in little cells repose;
But if night-robbers lift the well-stor'd hive,
A humming through their waxen city grows,
And out upon each others wings they drive.

Now streets grow throng'd and busy as by day:
Some run for buckets to the hallow'd quire:
Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play;
And some more bold mount ladders to the fire.

In vain; for from the East a Belgian wind
His hostile breath through the dry rafters sent;
The flames impell'd soon left their foes behind,
And forward with a wanton fury went.

A key of fire ran all along the shore,
And lighten'd all the river with a blaze:
The waken'd tides began again to roar,
And wondering fish in shining waters gaze.

Old father Thames rais'd up his reverend head,
But fear'd the fate of Simois would return:
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed,
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

The fire, meantime, walks in a broader gross:
To either hand his wings he opens wide:
He wades the streets, and straight he reaches cross,
And plays his longing flames on th' other side.

923 *And lighten'd all the river with a blaze*]
'Sigæa igni freta lata relucent.' *Virg. Orig. ed.*

At first they warm, then scorch, and then they take;
Now with long necks from side to side they feed:
At length, grown strong, their mother-fire forsake,
And a new colony of flames succeed.

To every nobler portion of the town
The curling billows roll their restless tide:
In parties now they straggle up and down,
As armies, unoppos'd, for prey divide.

One mighty squadron with a side-wind sped,
Through narrow lanes his cumber'd fire does haste,
By powerful charms of gold and silver led,
The Lombard bankers and the Change to waste.

Another backward to the Tower would go,
And slowly eats his way against the wind:
But the main body of the marching foe
Against th' imperial palace is design'd.

Now day appears, and with the day the king,
Whose early care had robb'd him of his rest:
Far off the cracks of falling houses ring,
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast.

Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke
With gloomy pillars cover all the place;
Whose little intervals of night are broke
By sparks, that drive against his sacred face.

More than his guards his sorrows made him known,
And pious tears, which down his cheeks did shower:
The wretched in his grief forgot their own;
So much the pity of a king has power.

He wept the flames of what he lov'd so well,
And what so well had merited his love:
For never prince in grace did more excel,
Our royal city more in duty strove.

Nor with an idle care did he behold:
Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress;
He cheers the fearful and commends the bold,
And makes despairers hope for good success.

Himself directs what first is to be done,
And orders all the succours which they bring:
The helpful and the good about him run,
And form an army worthy such a king.

He sees the dire contagion spread so fast,
That, where it seizes, all relief is vain:
And therefore must unwillingly lay waste
That country, which would else the foe maintain.

The powder blows up all before the fire:
Th' amazed flames stand gather'd on a heap;
And from the precipice's brink retire,
Afraid to venture on so large a leap.

Thus fighting fires a while themselves consume,
But straight like Turks, forc'd on to win or die,
They first lay tender bridges of their fume,
And o'er the breach in unctuous vapours fly.

Part stays for passage, 'till a gust of wind
Ships o'er their forces in a shining sheet:

Part creeping under ground their journey blind,
And climbing from below their fellows meet,

Thus to some desart plain, or old wood-side,
Dire night-hags come from far to dance their round;
And o'er broad rivers on their fiends they ride,
Or sweep in clouds above the blasted ground.

No help avails: for, hydra-like, the fire
Lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way:
And scarce the wealthy can one half retire,
Before he rushes in to share the prey.

The rich grow suppliant, and the poor grow proud:
Those offer mighty gain, and these ask more:
So void of pity is th' ignoble crowd,
When others ruin may increase their store.

As those, who live by shores, with joy behold
Some wealthy vessel split or stranded nigh;
And from the rocks leap down for shipwreck'd gold,
And seek the tempest which the others fly:

So these but wait the owners' last despair,
And what's permitted to the flames invade;

1002 *As those, who live by shores,* &c.] The gallant Sir Cloudesley Shovel was barbarously murdered on the coast of Cornwall, as he swam on shore, by a woman, who was incited to the barbarous act by the sight of a ring, which he wore on his finger. This is related on the authority of the late Lord Peterborough, who told it to Sir John Mordaunt, who related it to the late Dr. Shipley, bishop of St. Asaph.
J. W.

E'en from their jaws they hungry morsels tear,
And on their backs the spoils of Vulcan lade.

The days were all in this lost labour spent;
And when the weary king gave place to night,
His beams he to his royal brother lent,
And so shone still in his reflective light.

Night came, but without darkness or repose,
A dismal picture of the general doom;
Where souls distracted when the trumpet blows,
And half unready with their bodies come.

Those who have homes, when home they do repair,
To a last lodging call their wandering friends:
Their short uneasy sleeps are broke with care,
To look how near their own destruction tends.

Those who have none, sit round where once it was,
And with full eyes each wonted room require:
Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,
As murder'd men walk where they did expire.

Some stir up coals and watch the vestal fire,
Others in vain from sight of ruin run;
And, while through burning labyrinths they retire,
With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun.

The most in fields like herded beasts lie down,
To dews obnoxious on the grassy floor;
And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,
Sad parents watch the remnants of their store.

While by the motion of the flames they guess
What streets are burning now, and what are near,
An infant waking to the paps would press,
And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.

No thought can ease them but their sovereign's care,
Whose praise th' afflicted as their comfort sing:
E'en those, whom want might drive to just despair,
Think life a blessing under such a king.

Meantime he sadly suffers in their grief,
Out-weeps a hermit, and out-prays a saint:
All the night long he studies their relief,
How they may be supplied, and he may want.

O God, said he, thou Patron of my days,*
Guide of my youth in exile and distress!
Who me unfriended brought'st by wondrous ways,
The kingdom of my fathers to possess:

Be thou my Judge, with what unwearied care
I since have labour'd for my people's good;
To bind the bruises of a civil war,
And stop the issues of their wasting blood.

Thou, who hast taught me to forgive the ill,
And recompense, as friends, the good misled:
If mercy be a precept of thy will,
Return that mercy on thy servant's head.

Or if my heedless youth has stept astray,
Too soon forgetful of thy gracious hand;

* King's prayer. *Orig. ed.*

On me alone thy just displeasure lay,
But take thy judgments from this mourning land.

We all have sinn'd, and thou hast laid us low,
As humble earth from whence at first we came:
Like flying shades before the clouds we show,
And shrink like parchment in consuming flame.

O let it be enough what thou hast done;
When spotted deaths ran arm'd thro' every street,
With poison'd darts which not the good could shun,
The speedy could out-fly, or valiant meet.

The living few, and frequent funerals then,
Proclaim'd thy wrath on this forsaken place:
And now those few, who are return'd again,
Thy searching judgments to their dwellings trace.

O pass not, Lord, an absolute decree,
Or bind thy sentence unconditional:
But in thy sentence our remorse foresee,
And in that foresight this thy doom recall.

Thy threat'nings, Lord, as thine thou mayst revoke:
But, if immutable and fix'd they stand,
Continue still thyself to give the stroke,
And let not foreign foes oppress thy land.

Th' Eternal heard, and from the heavenly quire
Chose out the cherub with the flaming sword;
And bad him swiftly drive th' approaching fire
From where our naval magazines were stor'd.

The blessed minister his wings display'd,
And like a shooting star he cleft the night:
He charg'd the flames, and those that disobey'd
He lash'd to duty with his sword of light.

The fugitive flames, chastis'd, went forth to prey
On pious structures, by our fathers rear'd;
By which to heaven they did affect the way,
Ere faith in churchmen without works was heard.

The wanting orphans saw with wat'ry eyes
Their founders' charity in dust laid low;
And sent to God their ever-answer'd cries,
For he protects the poor, who made them so.

Nor could thy fabric, Paul's, defend thee long,
Though thou wert sacred to thy Maker's praise:
Though made immortal by a poet's song;
And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise.

The daring flames peep'd in, and saw from far
The awful beauties of the sacred quire:
But, since it was profan'd by civil war,
Heaven thought it fit to have it purg'd by fire.

Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came,
And widely opening did on both sides prey:
This benefit we sadly owe the flame,
If only ruin must enlarge our way.

And now four days the sun had seen our woes:
Four nights the moon beheld th' incessant fire:

It seem'd as if the stars more sickly rose,
And farther from the feverish north retire.

In th' empyrean heaven, the bless'd abode,
The Thrones and the Dominions prostrate lie,
Not daring to behold their angry God;
And a hush'd silence damps the tuneful sky.

At length th' Almighty cast a pitying eye,
And mercy softly touch'd his melting breast:
He saw the town's one half in rubbish lie,
And eager flames drive on to storm the rest.

A hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipt above;
Of it a broad extinguisher he makes
And hoods the flames that to their quarry drove.

The vanquish'd fires withdraw from every place,
Or full with feeding sink into a sleep:
Each household genius shows again his face,
And from the hearths the little lares creep.

Our king this more than natural change beholds;
With sober joy his heart and eyes abound:
To the All-good his lifted hands he folds,
And thanks him low on his redeemed ground.

As when sharp frosts had long constrain'd the earth,
A kindly thaw unlocks it with mild rain;
And first the tender blade peeps up to birth,
And straight the green fields laugh with promis'd grain:

By such degrees the spreading gladness grew
In every heart which fear had froze before:
The standing streets with so much joy they view,
That with less grief the perish'd they deplore.

The father of the people open'd wide
His stores, and all the poor with plenty fed:
Thus God's anointed God's own place supplied,
And fill'd the empty with his daily bread.

This royal bounty brought its own reward,
And in their minds so deep did print the sense;
That if their ruins sadly they regard,
'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence.

But so may he live long, that town to sway,
Which by his auspice they will nobler make,
As he will hatch their ashes by his stay,
And not their humble ruins now forsake.

They have not lost their loyalty by fire;
Nor is their courage or their wealth so low,
That from his wars they poorly would retire,
Or beg the pity of a vanquish'd foe.

Not with more constancy the Jews of old,
By Cyrus from rewarded exile sent,
Their royal city did in dust behold,
Or with more vigour to rebuild it went.

The utmost malice of their stars is past,
And two dire comets, which have scourg'd the town,

In their own plague and fire have breath'd the last,
Or dimly in their sinking sockets frown.

Now frequent trines the happier lights among,
And high rais'd Jove, from his dark prison freed,
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
Will gloriously the new-laid work succeed.

Methinks already, from this chymic flame,
I see a city of more precious mould:
Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,
With silver pav'd, and all divine with gold.

Already labouring with a mighty fate,
She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow,
And seems to have renew'd her charter's date,
Which heaven will to the death of time allow.

More great than human now, and more august,
Now deified she from her fires does rise:
Her widening streets on new foundations trust,
And, opening, into larger parts she flies.

Before, she like some shepherdess did show,
Who sat to bathe her by a river's side;
Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride.

Now, like a maiden queen, she will behold,
From her high turrets, hourly suitors come:
The east with incense, and the west with gold,
Will stand, like suppliants, to receive her doom.

The silver Thames, her own domestic flood,
Shall bear her vessels like a sweeping train;
And often wind, as of his mistress proud,
With longing eyes to meet her face again.

The wealthy Tagus, and the wealthier Rhine,
The glory of their towns no more shall boast,
And Seyne, that would with Belgian rivers join,
Shall find her lustre stain'd, and traffic lost.

The venturous merchant who design'd more far,
And touches on our hospitable shore,
Charm'd with the splendour of this northern star,
Shall here unlade him, and depart no more.

Our powerful navy shall no longer meet,
The wealth of France or Holland to invade:
The beauty of this town without a fleet,
From all the world shall vindicate her trade.

And, while this fam'd emporium we prepare,
The British ocean shall such triumphs boast,
That those, who now disdain our trade to share,
Shall rob like pirates on our wealthy coast.

Already we have conquer'd half the war,
And the less dangerous part is left behind:
Our trouble now is but to make them dare,
And not so great to vanquish as to find.

Thus to the eastern wealth through storms we go,
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more:
A constant trade-wind will securely blow,
And gently lay us on the spicy shore.

AN ESSAY UPON SATIRE,*

BY MR. DRYDEN AND THE EARL OF MULGRAVE.

How dull, and how insensible a beast
Is man, who yet would lord it o'er the rest?
Philosophers and poets vainly strove
In every age the lumpish mass to move:
But those were pedants, when compar'd with these,
Who know not only to instruct but please.
Poets alone found the delightful way,
Mysterious morals gently to convey
In charming numbers; so that as men grew
Pleas'd with their poems, they grew wiser too.
Satire has always shone among the rest,

* This piece was written in 1679, and handed about in manuscript some time before it made its appearance in print. It is supposed to have occasioned the beating Mr. Dryden received in Rose-street, Covent-garden, of which notice is taken in his life. The earl of Mulgrave's name has been always joined with Dryden's, as concerned in the composition; and that nobleman somewhere takes notice, that Dryden

Was prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes.

It is not improbable, that Rochester's character was drawn by his lordship, who held him in high contempt, after his behaving in a very dastardly manner when he challenged him. How, indeed, Lord Mulgrave came to subscribe to so disagreeable a picture of himself, is hard to divine. *D.*

And is the boldest way, if not the best,
To tell men freely of their foulest faults;
To laugh at their vain deeds, and vainer thoughts.
In satire too the wise took different ways,
To each deserving its peculiar praise.
Some did all folly with just sharpness blame,
Whilst others laugh'd and scorn'd them into shame.
But of these two, the last succeeded best,
As men aim rightest when they shoot in jest.
Yet, if we may presume to blame our guides,
And censure those, who censure all besides;
In other things they justly are preferr'd;
In this alone methinks the ancients err'd;
Against the grossest follies they declaim;
Hard they pursue, but hunt ignoble game.
Nothing is easier than such blots to hit,
And 'tis the talent of each vulgar wit:
Besides 'tis labour lost; for who would preach
Morals to Armstrong, or dull Aston teach?
'Tis being devout at play, wise at a ball,
Or bringing wit and friendship to Whitehall.
But with sharp eyes those nicer faults to find,
Which lie obscurely in the wisest mind;
That little speck which all the rest does spoil,
To wash off that would be a noble toil;
Beyond the loose writ libels of this age,
Or the forc'd scenes of our declining stage;
Above all censure too, each little wit
Will be so glad to see the greater hit;
Who judging better, though concern'd the most,

Of such correction will have cause to boast.
In such a satire all would seek a share,
And every fool will fancy he is there.
Old story-tellers too must pine and die,
To see their antiquated wit laid by;
Like her, who miss'd her name in a lampoon,
And grieved to find herself decay'd so soon.
No common coxcomb must be mention'd here:
Nor the dull train of dancing sparks appear:
Nor fluttering officers who never fight;
Of such a wretched rabble who would write?
Much less half wits: that's more against our rules:
For they are fops, the other are but fools.
Who would not be as silly as Dunbar?
As dull as Monmouth, rather than Sir Carr?
The cunning courtier should be slighted too,
Who with dull knavery makes so much ado;
Till the shrewd fool, by thriving too too fast,
Like Æsop's fox becomes a prey at last.
Nor shall the royal mistresses be nam'd,
Too ugly, or too easy to be blam'd;
With whom each rhyming fool keeps such a pother,
They are as common that way as the other:
Yet sauntering Charles between his beastly brace
Meets with dissembling still in either place,
Affected humour, or a painted face.

[61] *Nor shall the royal mistresses be nam'd*] About the time of the writing this poem, the king, if we may rely upon Bishop Burnet's authority, divided all his spare time between the Duchess of Portsmouth and Nell Gwin. *D.*

In loyal libels we have often told him,
How one has jilted him, the other sold him:
How that affects to laugh, how this to weep;
But who can rail so long as he can sleep?
Was ever prince by two at once misled,
False, foolish, old, ill-natur'd, and ill-bred?
Earnely and Aylesbury, with all that race
Of busy blockheads, shall have here no place;
At council set as foils on Danby's score,
To make that great false jewel shine the more;
Who all that while was thought exceeding wise,
Only for taking pains and telling lies.
But there's no meddling with such nauseous men;
Their very names have tired my lazy pen:
'Tis time to quit their company, and choose
Some fitter subject for a sharper muse.

First, let's behold the merriest man alive
Against his careless genius vainly strive;
Quit his dear ease, some deep design to lay,
'Gainst a set time, and then forget the day:
Yet he will laugh at his best friends, and be
Just as good company as Nokes and Lee.
But when he aims at reason or at rule,
He turns himself the best to ridicule.
Let him at business ne'er so earnest sit,
Show him but mirth, and bait that mirth with wit;
That shadow of a jest shall be enjoy'd,
Though he left all mankind to be destroy'd.

[89] *As Nokes and Lee*] These were two celebrated comedians in Charles the Second's reign. *D.*

So cat transform'd sat gravely and demure,
Till mouse appear'd, and thought himself secure;
But soon the lady had him in her eye,
And from her friend did just as oddly fly.
Reaching above our nature does no good;
We must fall back to our old flesh and blood;
As by our little Machiavel we find
That nimblest creature of the busy kind,
His limbs are crippled, and his body shakes;
Yet his hard mind, which all this bustle makes,
No pity of its poor companion takes.
What gravity can hold from laughing out,
To see him drag his feeble legs about,
Like hounds ill-coupled? Jowler lugs him still
Through hedges, ditches, and through all that's ill.
'Twere crime in any man but him alone,
To use a body so, though 'tis one's own:
Yet this false comfort never gives him o'er,
That whilst he creeps his vigorous thoughts can soar:
Alas! that soaring to those few that know,
Is but a busy groveling here below.
So men in rapture think they mount the sky,
Whilst on the ground th' intranced wretches lie:
So modern fops have fancied they could fly.
As the new earl with parts deserving praise,
And wit enough to laugh at his own ways;
Yet loses all soft days and sensual nights,
Kind nature checks, and kinder fortune slights;
Striving against his quiet all he can,
For the fine notion of a busy man.

And what is that at best, but one, whose mind
Is made to tire himself and all mankind?
For Ireland he would go; faith, let him reign;
For if some odd fantastic lord would fain
Carry in trunks, and all my drudgery do,
I'll not only pay him, but admire him too.
But is there any other beast that lives,
Who his own harm so wittingly contrives?
Will any dog that has his teeth and stones
Refinedly leave his bitches and his bones,
To turn a wheel? and bark to be employ'd,
While Venus is by rival dogs enjoy'd?
Yet this fond man, to get a statesman's name,
Forfeits his friends, his freedom, and his fame.
  Though satire nicely writ with humour stings
But those who merit praise in other things;
Yet we must needs this one exception make,
And break our rules for silly Tropos' sake;
Who was too much despis'd to be accus'd,
And therefore scarce deserves to be abus'd;
Rais'd only by his mercenary tongue,
For railing smoothly, and for reasoning wrong.
As boys on holidays let loose to play,
Lay waggish traps for girls that pass that way;
Then shout to see in dirt and deep distress
Some silly cit in her flower'd foolish dress:
So have I mighty satisfaction found,
To see his tinsel reason on the ground:
To see the florid fool despis'd, and know it,
By some who scarce have words enough to show it:

For sense sits silent, and condemns for weaker
The sinner, nay sometimes the wittiest speaker:
But 'tis prodigious so much eloquence
Should be acquired by such little sense;
For words and wit did anciently agree,
And Tully was no fool, though this man be·
At bar abusive, on the bench unable,
Knave on the woolsack, fob at council table.
These are the grievances of such fools as would
Be rather wise than honest, great than good.

Some other kind of wits must be made known,
Whose harmless errors hurt themselves alone;
Excess of luxury they think can please,
And laziness call loving of their ease:
To live dissolv'd in pleasures still they feign,
Though their whole life's but intermitting pain:
So much of surfeits, headaches, claps are seen,
We scarce perceive the little time between:
Well-meaning men who make this gross mistake,
And pleasure lose only for pleasure's sake;
Each pleasure has its price, and when we pay
Too much of pain, we squander life away.

Thus Dorset, purring like a thoughtful cat,
Married, but wiser puss ne'er thought of that:

178 *Thus Dorset, purring like,* &c.] Charles, Earl of Dorset, about this time forty years of age, was one of the best bred men of his time. He was a lord of the bed-chamber, and sent several times with compliments, or on short embassies, to France, for the king could not bear to be long without him: he was a most munificent patron; learning an genius were sure of his protection; and when our author was

And first he worried her with railing rhyme, 180
Like Pembroke's mastiffs at his kindest time;

deprived of the bays, he allowed him the laureat's annual stipend out of his own private purse. Arthur Manwaring, Mr. Prior, and many other men of abilities, owed to him their being advanced and provided for. Nor was he less brave than polite and learned; for he attended the Duke of York as a volunteer in the first Dutch war, and by his coolness, courage, and conduct, showed himself a worthy representative of his many illustrious ancestors. The night before the famous battle, in which the Dutch Admiral Opdam was blown up, he made a celebrated song, with the greatest composure, beginning,

To you fair ladies now at land,
We men at sea indite, &c.

No man had more ease or good humour; his conversation was refined and sprightly: he had studied books and men deeply, and to good purpose; he was an excellent critic, and good poet, with a strong turn to satire, for which he is thus highly complimented in the State Poems, vol. i. p. 200.

'Dorset writes satire too, and writes so well,
O great Apollo! let him still rebel.
Pardon a muse which does, like his, excel,
Pardon a muse which does, with art, support
Some drowsy wit in our unthinking court.'

He wrote with severity, but that severity was always justly pointed, and Lord Rochester calls him

'The best good man, with the worst natur'd muse.'

His first wife, the Countess Dowager of Falmouth, had proved a barren wife. Of her having been a teeming widow I am ignorant. His second wife, whom he married in 1685, was daughter to the Earl of Northampton, and mother to the present Duke of Dorset. He was principally concerned in bringing about the revolution; was lord-chamberlain to King William and Queen Mary; chosen a knight of the garter in

Then for one night sold all his slavish life,
A teeming widow, but a barren wife;
Swell'd by contact of such a fulsome toad,
He lugg'd about the matrimonial load;
Till fortune, blindly kind as well as he,
Has ill restor'd him to his liberty;
Which he would use in his old sneaking way,
Drinking all night and dozing all the day;
Dull as Ned Howard, whom his brisker times
Had fam'd for dulness in malicious rhymes.
Mulgrave had much ado to scape the snare,

1691, and several times appointed one of the regents, when the affairs of Europe demanded the absence of the king. He died at Bath in 1706, aged 69, lamented by every class of people, and the most opposite parties. Mr. Pope gives him these lines:

'Dorset, the grace of courts, the muse's pride,
Patron of arts, and judge of nature, died.' *D.*

190 *Dull as Ned Howard, whom his brisker times*
Had fam'd for dulness in malicious rhymes]

Edward Howard, Esq. a gentleman of the Berkshire family, consequently related to Sir Robert Howard. He wrote four plays, called, 1st. The Man of Newmarket, a comedy. 2nd. Six Days' Adventure; or, The New Utopia, a comedy. 3rd. The Usurper, a tragedy. 4th. Women's Conquest, a tragi-comedy: but none of them succeeded on the stage, nor procured him any reputation. He also published an epic poem, called the British Princes, for which he was severely ridiculed by all the wits of his age: Lord Rochester, Lord Dorset, Mr. Waller, the Duke of Buckingham, Dr. Spratt, Lord Vaughan, published lampoons upon it, most of them printed in the six volumes of Miscellanies published by Dryden. *D.*

Though learn'd in all those arts that cheat the fair:
For after all his vulgar marriage mocks,
With beauty dazzled, Numps was in the stocks;
Deluded parents dried their weeping eyes,
To see him catch his tartar for his prize:
Th' impatient town waited the wish'd-for change,
And cuckolds smil'd in hopes of sweet revenge;
Till Petworth plot made us with sorrow see,
As his estate, his person too was free:
Him no soft thoughts, no gratitude could move;
To gold he fled from beauty and from love;
Yet failing there he keeps his freedom still,
Forc'd to live happily against his will:
'Tis not his fault, if too much wealth and power
Break not his boasted quiet every hour.
And little Sid, for simile renown'd,
Pleasure has always sought but never found:

[208] *And little Sid, for simile renown'd,*
Pleasure has always sought but never found]

This Sidney, brother of Algernon Sidney and the Earl of Leicester, was rather a man of pleasure than of business; his talents were great, but his indolence was greater; his appearance was graceful; he was a favourite with the ladies, had a turn for intrigue, and was of a disposition exactly fitted to Charles's court, easy, affable, and insinuating; free from any guile, and a friend to mankind. In 1679 he went envoy to the Hague, where he contracted an intimacy with the Prince of Orange, whose friends he heartily assisted in raising him to the throne, being himself a messenger from England to Holland upon that very business in 1688. He was raised to the dignity of Lord Sidney, and Earl of Rumney, in 1688; declared secretary of state, master of the ordnance,

Though all his thoughts on wine and women fall,
His are so bad, sure he ne'er thinks at all.
The flesh he lives upon is rank and strong,
His meat and mistresses are kept too long.
But sure we all mistake this pious man,
Who mortifies his person all he can:
What we uncharitably take for sin,
Are only rules of this odd capuchin;
For never hermit under grave pretence
Has liv'd more contrary to common sense;
And 'tis a miracle we may suppose,
No nastiness offends his skilful nose;
Which from all stink can with peculiar art
Extract perfume and essence from a f—t:
Expecting supper is his great delight;
He toils all day but to be drunk at night;
Then o'er his cups this night-bird chirping sits,
Till he takes Hewet and Jack Hall for wits.
  Rochester I despise for want of wit,
Though thought to have a tail and cloven feet;

and lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1689; and was removed from the latter post in 1693, it being thought that he held the reins of power with too slack a hand. *D.*

227 *Till he takes Hewet and Jack Hall for wits*] Sir George Hewit, a man of quality, famous for gallantry, and often named in the State Poems. Sir George Etheredge intended for him the celebrated character of Sir Fopling Flutter.

'Scarce will there greater grief pierce every heart,
Should Sir George Hewit, or Sir Carr, depart.
Had it not better been, than thus to roam,
To stay and tie the cravat string at home;

For while he mischief means to all mankind,
Himself alone the ill effects does find:
And so like witches justly suffers shame,
Whose harmless malice is so much the same.
False are his words, affected is his wit;
So often he does aim, so seldom hit:
To every face he cringes while he speaks,
But when the back is turn'd the head he breaks:
Mean in each action, lewd in every limb,
Manners themselves are mischievous in him:
A proof that chance alone makes every creature
A very Killigrew without good nature.

To strut, look big, shake pantaloon, and swear,
With Hewit, dammee, there's no action there.'

State Poems, vol. i. p. 155.

The above lines are addressed by Rochester to Lord Mulgrave, when bound for Tangier.

Jack Hall, a courtier, whom I take to be the same with Uzza in the second part of Absalom and Achitophel, is thus mentioned in the State Poems, vol. ii. p. 135:

'Jack Hall ——————— left town,
But first writ something he dare own,
Of prologue lawfully begotten,
And full nine months maturely thought on:
Born with hard labour, and much pain,
Ously was Dr. Chamberlain.
At length from stuff and rubbish pick'd,
As bears' cubs into shape are lick'd,
When Wharton, Etherege, and Soame,
To give it their last strokes were come,
Those critics differ'd in their doom.
Yet Swan says, he admir'd it 'seap'd,
Since 'twas Jack Hall's without being clapp'd.'

Swan was a notorious punster. *D.*

241 *A very Killigrew without good nature*] Thomas Kil

For what a Bessus has he always liv'd,
And his own kickings notably contriv'd?
For, there's the folly that's still mix'd with fear,
Cowards more blows than any hero bear;
Of fighting sparks some may their pleasures say,
But 'tis a bolder thing to run away:
The world may well forgive him all his ill,
For every fault does prove his penance still:
Falsely he falls into some dangerous noose,
And then as meanly labours to get loose;

grew, of whom we hear daily so many pleasant stories related, had good natural parts, but no regular education. He was brother to Sir William Killigrew, vice-chamberlain to King Charles the Second's queen; had been some time page of honour to King Charles I. and was, after the restoration, many years master of the revels, and groom of the chamber to King Charles II., in whose exile he shared, being his resident at Venice in 1651. During his travels abroad he wrote several plays, none of which are much talked of. His itch of writing, and his character as a wit and companion, occasioned this distich from Sir John Denham,

'Had Cowley ne'er spoke, Killigrew ne'er writ,
Combin'd in one they'd made a matchless wit.'

The same knight wrote a ballad on him.

Killigrew was a most facetious companion; his wit was lively and spirited; and he had a manner of saying the bitterest things, without provoking resentment; he tickled you while he made you smart, and you overlooked the pain, charmed by the pleasure. He died at Whitehall in March 1682, aged seventy-one, bewailed by his friends, and truly wept for by the poor. *D.*

242 *For what a Bessus has he always lived*] Bessus is a remarkable cowardly character in Beaumont and Fletcher. *D.*

A life so infamous is better quitting,
Spent in base injury and low submitting.
I'd like to have left out his poetry;
Forgot by all almost as well as me.
Sometimes he has some humour, never wit,
And if it rarely, very rarely, hit,
'Tis under so much nasty rubbish laid,
To find it out's the cinder woman's trade;
Who for the wretched remnants of a fire
Must toil all day in ashes and in mire.
So lewdly dull his idle works appear,
The wretched texts deserve no comments here;
Where one poor thought sometimes, left all alone,
For a whole page of dulness must atone.

How vain a thing is man, and how unwise?
E'en he, who would himself the most despise?
I, who so wise and humble seem to be,
Now my own vanity and pride can't see,
While the world's nonsense i so sharply shown,
We pull down others but to raise our own;
That we may angels seem, we paint them elves,
And are but satires to set up ourselves.
I, who have all this while been finding fault,
E'en with my master, who first satire taught;
And did by that describe the task so hard,
It seems stupendous and above reward!
Now labour with unequal force to climb
That lofty hill, unreach'd by former time:
'Tis just that I should to the bottom fall,
Learn to write well, or not to write at all.

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL;

PART I.

——— Si propiùs stes
Te capiet magis———

A POEM, PUBLISHED 1681.

THE OCCASION OF IT EXPLAINED.

THE Earl of Shaftesbury seemed bent upon the ruin of the Duke of York. It was mostly through his influence in both houses, that those infamous witnesses, Oates, Tongue, Bedloe, &c., were so strenuously encouraged, and the Popish plot, if not schemed by him, was at least by him cherished and supported. He had been heard to say with some exultation, *I wont pretend to pronounce who started the game, but I am sure I have had the full hunting.* At this day that plot appears, to impartial and discerning eyes, to have been a forgery contrived to inflame the minds of the people against popery, a religion now professed by the duke, that the bill for excluding him from the throne might meet with more countenance and greater certainty of success; and it went very near having the desired effect.

The indiscreet zeal and imprudent conduct of the Roman Catholics, for some time past, had given too much room for suspicion; they having often openly, and in defiance of the established laws of the kingdom, shown a thorough contempt for the established religion of their country, propagated as much as possible their own tenets, loudly triumphed in their progress, and daily acquisition of proselytes among all ranks of people, without the least secrecy or caution. Hence was the nation ripe for alarm: when given, it spread like wildfire; and the Duke of York, as head of the party at which it was aimed, was obliged to withdraw to Brussels to avoid the impending storm.

The king being some time after taken ill, produced his highness's sudden return, before his enemies, and those in

the opposition to the court measures, could provide for his reception; so that their schemes were thus for a while disconcerted. Lest his presence might revive commotion, he returned again to Brussels, and was then permitted (previously) to retire to Scotland, having received the strongest assurances of his brother's affection and resolution to secure him and his heirs the succession. He had before this the satisfaction of seeing the turbulent Earl of Shaftesbury removed from his seat and precedence in the privy-council, as well as all share in the ministry; and now prevailed to have the Duke of Monmouth dismissed from all his posts, and sent into Holland.

Shaftesbury's views were to lift Monmouth to the throne, whose weaknesses he knew he could so effectually manage, as to have the reins of government in that case in his own hands. Monmouth was the eldest of the king's sons, by whom he was tenderly beloved. His mother was one Mrs. Lucy Walters, otherwise Barlow, a Pembrokeshire woman, who bore him at Rotterdam in 1649, and between whom and his majesty it was artfully reported, there had passed a contract of marriage. This report was narrowly examined into, and proved false, to the full satisfaction of the privy-council, and of the people in general, though Shaftesbury did all in his power to support and establish a belief of its reality. The youth was educated at Paris under the queen-mother, and brought over to England in 1662: soon after which time he was created Duke of Orkney in Scotland, and Monmouth in England, or rather Wales; chosen a knight of the garter; appointed master of horse to his majesty, general of the land forces, colonel of the life-guard of horse, lord-lieutenant of the East Riding of Yorkshire, governor of Kingston-upon-Hull, chief justice in eyre on the south of the river Trent, lord-chamberlain of Scotland, and Duke of Buccleugh, in right of his wife, who was daughter and heiress to a noble and wealthy earl, bearing that name; but he lost all those places of honour and fortune, together with his royal father's favour, by the insinuation and art of Shaftesbury, who poisoned him with illegal and ambitious notions, that ended in his destruction.

The partizans of this earl, and other malecontents, had long pointed out his Grace as a proper successor to the crown, instead of the Duke of York, in case of the king's demise; and he began to believe that he had a real right to be so. At the instigation of his old friend Shaftesbury, he returned to England without his father's consent, who would

not see him; and, instead of obeying the royal mandate to retire again, he and Shaftesbury jointly made a pompous parade through several counties in the west and north of England, scattering the seeds of discord and disaffection; so that their designs seemed to be levelled against the government, and a tempest was gathering at a distance, not unlike that which swept the royal martyr from his throne and life. Many people, who would not otherwise have taken part with the court, shuddering when they looked back upon the scenes of anarchy and confusion, that had followed that melancholy catastrophe, in order to prevent the return of a similar storm, attached themselves to the king and the Duke of York; and the latter returned to court, where he kept his ground.

The kingdom was now in a high fermentation; the murmurs of each party broke out into altercation, and declamatory abuse. Every day produced new libels and disloyal pamphlets. To answer and expose them, their partizans and abettors, several authors were retained by authority, but none came up to the purpose so well as Sir Roger l'Estrange, in the Observator; and the poet laureat, in the poem under inspection, the elegance and severity of which raised his character prodigiously, and showed the proceedings of Shaftesbury and his followers in a most severe light. These writings, according to Echard, in a great measure stemmed the tide of a popular current, that might have otherwise immersed the nation in ruin. His Grace the Duke of Monmouth afterwards engaged in the Ryehouse Plot, and a reward was offered for the taking him, both by his father and Lewis XIV. whether in England or France. He obtained his pardon both of the king and duke, by two very submissive, nay abject, letters; and being admitted to the royal presence, seemed extremely sorry for his past offences, confessed his having engaged in a design for seizing the king's guards, and changing the government, but denied having any knowledge of a scheme for assassinating either his father or uncle, which it seems was set on foot by the inferior ministers of this conspiracy.

Presuming, however, upon the king's paternal affection, he soon recanted his confession, and consorted with his old followers; so that the king forbid him the court, and he retired to Holland, from whence he returned in 1685, raised a rebellion against his uncle, then on the throne, caused himself to be proclaimed king, and being defeated and taken prisoner, was beheaded on Tower-hill, in his thirty-sixth year. *D.*

TO THE READER.

'Tis not my intention to make an apology for my poem: some will think it needs no excuse, and others will receive none. The design I am sure is honest; but he who draws his pen for one party must expect to make enemies of the other. For wit and fool are consequents of whig and tory;* and every man is a knave or an ass to the contrary side. There is a treasury of merits in the fanatic church, as well as in the popish; and a pennyworth to be had of saintship, honesty, and poetry, for the lewd, the factious, and the blockheads; but the longest chapter in Deuteronomy has not curses enough for an anti-Bromingham. My comfort is, their manifest prejudice to my cause will render their judgment of less authority against me. Yet if a poem have a genius, it will force its own reception in the world; for there's a sweetness in good verse, which tickles even while it hurts, and no man can be heartily angry with him who pleases him against his will. The commendation of adversaries is the greatest triumph of a writer, because it never comes unless extorted. But I can be satisfied on more easy terms: if I happen to please the more moderate sort, I shall be sure of an honest party, and, in all probability, of the best judges: for the least concerned are commonly the least corrupt. And I confess I have laid in for those, by rebating the satire (where justice would allow it) from carrying too sharp an edge. They who can criticise so weakly, as to imagine I have done my worst, may be convinced, at their own cost, that I can write severely with more ease than I can gently. I have but laughed at some men's follies, when I could have declaimed against their vices; and other men's virtues I have commended, as freely as I have taxed their crimes. And now, if you are a malicious reader, I expect you should return upon me that I affect to be thought more impartial than I am. But if men are not to be judged by their professions, God forgive you commonwealth's men for professing so plausibly for the government. You cannot be so unconscionable as to charge me for not subscribing of my name;

* It was now that the party distinctions of whig and tory were first adopted; the courtiers were deridingly compared to the Irish banditti, who were called tories; and they likened their opponents to whigs, a denomination of reproach, formerly given the Scotch covenanters, who were supposed to live on a poor kind of buttermilk so called. These names still distinguish contending parties in England, though strangely varied from their original application. *D.*

for that would reflect too grossly upon your own party, who never dare, though they have the advantage of a jury to secure them. If you like not my poem, the fault may, possibly be in my writing (though 'tis hard for an author to judge against himself); but, more probably, 'tis in your morals, which cannot bear the truth of it. The violent, on both sides, will condemn the character of Absalom, as either too favourably or too hardly drawn. But they are not the violent whom I desire to please. The fault on the right hand is to extenuate, palliate, and indulge; and to confess freely, I have endeavoured to commit it. Besides the respect which I owe his birth, I have a greater for his heroic virtues; and David himself could not be more tender of the young man's life than I would be of his reputation. But since the most excellent natures are always the most easy, and, as being such, are the soonest perverted by ill counsels, especially when baited with fame and glory; 'tis no more a wonder that he withstood not the temptations of Achitophel, than it was for Adam not to have resisted the two devils, the serpent and the woman. The conclusion of the story I purposely forbore to prosecute, because I could not obtain from myself to show Absalom unfortunate. The frame of it was cut out but for a picture to the waist, and if the draught be so far true, 'tis as much as I designed.

Were I the inventor, who am only the historian, I should certainly conclude the piece with the reconcilement of Absalom to David. And who knows but this may come to pass? Things were not brought to an extremity where I left the story; there seems yet to be room left for a composure; hereafter there may be only for pity. I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accused of a good-natured error, and to hope with Origen, that the devil himself may at last be saved. For which reason, in this poem, he is neither brought to set his house in order, nor to dispose of his person afterwards as he in wisdom shall think fit. God is infinitely merciful; and his vicegerent is only not so, because he is not infinite.

The true end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction. And he, who writes honestly, is no more an enemy to the offender, than the physician to the patient, when he prescribes harsh remedies to an inveterate disease; for those are only in order to prevent the chirurgeon's work of an *Ense recidendum*, which I wish not to my very enemies. To conclude all; if the body politic have any analogy to the natural, in my weak judgment, an act of oblivion were as necessary in a hot distempered state, as an opiate would be in a raging fever.

ABSALOM* AND ACHITOPHEL.

In pious times ere priestcraft did begin,
Before polygamy was made a sin;
When man on many multiplied his kind,
Ere one to one was cursedly confined;
When nature prompted, and no law denied
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;
Then Israel's monarch after heaven's own heart,
His vigorous warmth did variously impart
To wives and slaves; and wide as his command,
Scatter'd his Maker's image through the land.
Michal, of royal blood, the crown did wear;
A soil ungrateful to the tiller's care:
Not so the rest; for several mothers bore
To god-like David several sons before.
But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,
No true succession could their seed attend.
Of all this numerous progeny was none
So beautiful, so brave, as Absalom:
Whether inspir'd by some diviner lust,

* Among the many answers to, and remarks on, this poem, the following are curious:—'Towser the Second, a Bull-dog; or, a short Reply to Absalon and Achitophel,' folio, half-sheet, London, 1681. 'Absalon's IX. Worthies,' a Poem, folio, half-sheet, no date. 'Poetical Reflections on Absalom and Achitophel,' folio, s. d. 'Absalom Senior,' a Poem, folio, 1682. *T.*

His father got him with a greater gust:
Or that his conscious destiny made way,
By manly beauty to imperial sway.
Early in foreign fields he won renown,
With kings and states allied to Israel's crown:
In peace the thoughts of war he could remove,
And seem'd as he were only born for love.
Whate'er he did, was done with so much ease,
In him alone 'twas natural to please:
His motions all accompanied with grace;
And paradise was open'd in his face.
With secret joy indulgent David view'd
His youthful image in his son renew'd:
To all his wishes nothing he denied;
And made the charming Annabel his bride.
What faults he had, (for who from faults is free?)
His father could not, or he would not see.
Some warm excesses which the law forbore,
Were constru'd youth that purg'd by boiling o'er,
And Amnon's murder by a specious name,
Was call'd a just revenge for injur'd fame.
Thus prais'd and lov'd, the noble youth remain'd,
While David, undisturb'd, in Sion reign'd.

[30] *And paradise was open'd in his face*] Pope's Eloisa, in her compliment to Abelard on his founding the Paraclete, is certainly indebted to this personal description; and the ingenuity of the poet, in the local adaptation, is truly admirable:

'You rais'd these hallow'd walls; the desart smil'd,
And paradise was open'd in the wild.' *T.*

But life can never be sincerely blest;
Heaven punishes the bad, and proves the best.
The Jews, a headstrong, moody, murmuring race,
As ever tried the extent and stretch of grace;
God's pamper'd people, whom debauch'd with ease,
No king could govern, nor no God could please;
(Gods they had tried of every shape and size,
That godsmiths could produce, or priests devise:)
These Adam-wits, too fortunately free, [51]
Began to dream they wanted liberty;
And when no rule, no precedent was found,
Of men, by laws less circumscrib'd and bound;
They led their wild desires to woods and caves,
And thought that all but savages were slaves.
They who, when Saul was dead, without a blow,
Made foolish Ishbosheth the crown forego;
Who banish'd David did from Hebron bring,
And with a general shout proclaim'd him king:
Those very Jews, who, at their very best, [61]
Their humour more than loyalty exprest,
Now wonder'd why so long they had obey'd
An idol monarch, which their hands had made;
Thought they might ruin him they could create,
Or melt him to that golden calf a state.

[51] *These Adam-wits*, &c.] Persons discontented in happy circumstances are not unluckily called *Adam-wits*, from a remembrance of Adam's weakness in Paradise, who, aiming at being happier than the happiest, by persuasion of Eve, eat of the forbidden fruit, and thereby forfeited the divine favour, and was excluded the garden of Eden. *D.*

But these were random bolts: no form'd design,
Nor interest made the factious crowd to join:
The sober part of Israel, free from stain,
Well knew the value of a peaceful reign;
And, looking backward with a wise affright,
Saw seams of wounds dishonest to the sight:
In contemplation of whose ugly scars
They curst the memory of civil wars.
The moderate sort of men thus qualified,
Inclined the balance to the better side;
And David's mildness managed it so well,
The bad found no occasion to rebel.
But when to sin our bias'd nature leans,
The careful devil is still at hand with means;
And providently pimps for ill desires:
The good old cause revived a plot requires.
Plots, true or false, are necessary things,
To raise up commonwealths, and ruin kings.
The inhabitants of old Jerusalem
Were Jebusites; the town so call'd from them;
And theirs the native right ———
But when the chosen people grew more strong,
The rightful cause at length became the wrong;
And every loss the men of Jebus bore,
They still were thought God's enemies the more.
Thus worn or weaken'd, well or ill content,
Submit they must to David's government:
Impoverish'd and deprived of all command,
Their taxes doubled as they lost their land;
And what was harder yet to flesh and blood,

Their gods disgraced, and burnt like common wood,
This set the heathen priesthood in a flame;
For priests of all religions are the same.
Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be,
Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
In his defence his servants are as bold,
As if he had been born of beaten gold.
The Jewish rabbins, though their enemies,
In this conclude them honest men and wise:
For 'twas their duty all the learned think,
T' espouse his cause, by whom they eat and drink.
From hence began that plot, the nation's curse,
Bad in itself, but represented worse;
Rais'd in extremes, and in extremes decried;
With oaths affirm'd, with dying vows denied;
Not weigh'd nor winnow'd by the multitude;
But swallow'd in the mass, unchew'd and crude.
Some truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with lies,
To please the fools, and puzzle all the wise.
Succeeding times did equal folly call,
Believing nothing, or believing all.
Th' Egyptian rites the Jebusites embrac'd;
Where gods were recommended by their taste.
Such savoury deities must needs be good,
As served at once for worship and for food.
By force they could not introduce these gods;
For ten to one in former days was odds.
So fraud was used, the sacrificer's trade:
Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade.

Their busy teachers mingled with the Jews,
And rak'd for converts even the court and stews:
Which Hebrew priests the more unkindly took,
Because the fleece accompanies the flock.
Some thought they God's anointed meant to slay
By guns, invented since full many a day:
Our author swears it not; but who can know
How far the devil and Jebusites may go?
This plot, which fail'd for want of common sense,
Had yet a deep and dangerous consequence:
For as when raging fevers boil the blood,
The standing lake soon floats into a flood,
And every hostile humour, which before
Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;
So several factions from this first ferment
Work up to foam, and threat the government.
Some by their friends, more by themselves thought wise,
Oppos'd the power to which they could not rise.
Some had in courts been great, and thrown from thence,
Like fiends were harden'd in impenitence.
Some, by their monarch's fatal mercy, grown
From pardon'd rebels kinsmen to the throne,
Were rais'd in power and public office high;
Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie.
Of these the false Achitophel was first;

150 *Of these the false*] This is the introduction of the chief hero of this piece, the celebrated Earl of Shaftesbury, under the name of Achitophel. A man, insinuating, imposing in

A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs, and crooked councils fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;

private, eloquent, daring in public, full of resources in both; who had been bred up in the schools of civil commotion, in the long parliament, in Cromwell's revolutions, and in those which followed Cromwell's death; and who, from that education, knew well the power of popular rumours, at times when popular passions are in ferment; framed the fiction of the popish plot in the year 1678, in order to bury the Duke, and perhaps the King, under the weight of the national fear and hatred of popery. Shaftesbury was stimulated too by offences both given and received; for the King having said to him, 'Shaftesbury, thou art the greatest rogue in the kingdom,' he answered, bowing, 'Of a subject, Sir, I believe I am.' And the Duke rated him in passionate terms for one of his speeches in parliament. 'I am glad,' said he, 'your Royal Highness has not called me papist and coward.' The account of this plot, in which was involved the assassination of Charles and his brother, an invasion, the conflagration of the city, and a massacre of the protestants, was calculated, in its great lines, to gain the attention of the higher ranks of the nation, and, by the familiarity and detail of its circumstances, to catch the credulity of the meanest of the populace. By making the Duke one of the objects of the pretended assassination, it prevented the suspicion of its being directed against him; and by accusing the Queen, whom the King did not love, it gave a chance for separating the interests of the brothers. The information, as soon as given, flew instantly abroad. Even the marvellousness of the story gave credit to what it was almost impossible to believe human fiction could have invented. Accident after accident, arising in a manner unparalleled in history, concurred to maintain the delusion. Coleman's letters were seized, which disco-

In power unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace:
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy-body to decay,
And o'er inform'd the tenement of clay.

vered that the Duke had been carrying on a correspondence with France, against the religion of his country, and its interests. Danby's correspondence with France for money to the King was betrayed, which made Charles a sharer in his brother's disgrace; but above all, the murder of Godfrey, who, in his office of a magistrate, had made public the plot, caused almost every protestant to imagine he felt the dagger in his breast. Shaftesbury knew too well the nature of the human mind, not to improve upon this last accident. He suggested to his faction to bring the eye in aid of the imagination, in order to complete the terror of the people. The dead body, ghastly, and with the sword fixed in it, and lying on a bier, was exposed during two days in the public street. It was carried in procession through the city of London to the grave, as the remains of a martyr to the protestant religion; seventy-two clergymen walking before, near a thousand persons of condition behind, innumerable crowds in a long silent order, an expression of passion more dangerous than that of clamour and confusion, bringing up the rear.

Such is the character given by my amiable and ingenious friend, Sir John Dalrymple, of this celebrated politician; which character having been censured as unjust and severe, the author, with that candour and liberality that endears him to his acquaintance, made the following apology in his second volume of Memoirs, p. 325: 'It has been a misfortune to Lord Shaftesbury's memory, that every thing has been written against him, and nothing for him; upon which account, I am happy to hear, that his family have thoughts of endeavouring to vindicate his memory in public. Far from the intention to injure it, I flatter myself that the papers published in this Appendix will set his character, in several respects, in

A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleas'd with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.

a new light in the world. They will show that he had no hand in the Duchess of Orleans's treaty, made at Dover for the interests of popery; that Charles first broke the ties of honour with him, by deceiving and betraying him into the second treaty with France, in the year 1671, while he concealed from him the first, which had been made in the year 1670; and that Shaftesbury took no money from France, at a time when most of his friends of the popular party were doing it.'

It is painful and difficult to bring one's mind to conceive, that a man, totally profligate and unprincipled, could have been so much respected and beloved, as he was, by such a man as Mr. Locke, and could have been one of the most upright, able, irreproachable, popular Lord Chancellors, that ever adorned that high station, to which Dryden himself bears testimony in the strongest manner, in six fine lines, beginning line 186. It is to be lamented that Locke never finished the Memoirs he began of Lord Shaftesbury's Life. A very curious and long extract is given from Locke's papers, by Le Clerc, in the seventh volume of the Bibliotheque Choisie, from page 147 to page 169, well worthy the attentive perusal of the impartial reader. Locke dwells much on the acuteness of his wit, and his deep and close penetration into the human heart; of which, among others, he gives a remarkable instance. Having dined at Lord Clarendon's with Lord Southampton, he said, on their return, to the latter, 'Miss Anne Hyde, whom we have just left, is certainly married to one of the royal brothers. A certain secret respect, a studied and suppressed attention and complaisance, paid to her by the mother, in her voice, looks, and gestures, and even in the manner in which she offered her every thing at the table, renders this suspicion of mine indisputable.' Lord South-

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won,
To that unfeather'd two-legg'd thing, a son;
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try;
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate;
Resolv'd to ruin or to rule the state.
To compass this the triple bond he broke;

ampton laughed at the time at the improbability of this conjecture, but was soon afterwards convinced of its truth. In these Memoirs is preserved a spirited letter to the Duke of York from Shaftesbury, when he was confined in the tower, in the year 1676. A saying of this sharp-sighted nobleman deserves to be remembered: 'That wisdom lay in the heart, not in the head; and that it was not the want of knowledge, but the perverseness of the will, that filled men's actions with folly, and their lives with disorder.' *Dr. W. J.*

175 *The triple bond he broke*] In the year 1667, a triple alliance was entered into between England, Sweden, and Holland, which was dissolved by the second Dutch war, to which, and a closer connexion with France, Lord Shaftesbury contributed his advice, and thereby

Fitted Israel for a foreign yoke.

The remaining lines allude to his having changed his opinion, when he found it unpopular, as we have observed above, down to

Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge,
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge. *D.*

The pillars of the public safety shook;
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke:
Then seiz'd with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurp'd a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves in factious times,
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will?
Where crowds can wink, and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own?
Yet fame deserv'd no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abethdin
With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean,
Unbrib'd, unsought, the wretched to redress;
Swift of dispatch, and easy of access.
Oh! had he been content to serve the crown,
With virtues only proper to the gown;
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
From cockle, that oppress'd the noble seed;
David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
And heaven had wanted one immortal song.

179 *Usurp'd a patriot's all-atoning name*] The first edition reads: *Assum'd a patron's all-atoning name.* This last variation, evidently a typographical error, seems to have been discovered and corrected while the poem was going through the press. There is, in the library of Sion college, a copy of the first edition, which reads: *Assum'd* a *patriot's* all-atoning name. * *

189—191 These twelve lines were added in the second edition. * *

But wild Ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And Fortune's ice prefers to Virtue's land.
Achitophel, grown weary to possess
A lawful fame, and lazy happiness,
Disdain'd the golden fruit to gather free,
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.
Now, manifest of crimes contriv'd long since,
He stood at bold defiance with his prince;
Held up the buckler of the people's cause
Against the crown, and skulk'd behind the laws.
The wish'd occasion of the plot he takes;
Some circumstances finds, but more he makes.
By buzzing emissaries fills the ears
Of listening crowds with jealousies and fears
Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
And proves the king himself a Jebusite.
Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well
Were strong with people easy to rebel.
For, govern'd by the moon, the giddy Jews
Tread the same track when she the prime renews;

205 *He stood at bold defiance*] The particular circumstance that drove Shaftesbury into a sudden opposition to the court was, that the king, alarmed at the strong remonstrances of the commons against popery and a dispensing power, and breaking with his own hands the seal affixed to the declaration of indulgence, and granting all the commons desired, was guilty himself of a breach of promise to his new ministers, and exposed them to the vengeance of the people. To escape which vengeance, the *Cabal* made the same sudden turn with their master; so that on this occasion, Shaftesbury said, 'The prince who forsook himself deserved to be forsaken.'

Dr. J. W.

And once in twenty years, their scribes record,
By natural instinct they change their lord.
Achitophel still wants a chief, and none
Was found so fit as warlike Absalon.
Not that he wish'd his greatness to create,
For politicians neither love nor hate:
But, for he knew his title not allow'd,
Would keep him still depending on the crowd:
That kingly power, thus ebbing out, might be
Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.
Him he attempts with studied arts to please,
And sheds his venom in such words as these.
Auspicious prince, at whose nativity
Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky;
Thy longing country's darling and desire;
Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire:
Their second Moses, whose extended wand
Divides the seas, and shows the promis'd land:
Whose dawning day in every distant age
Has exercis'd the sacred prophet's rage:
The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,
The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!
Thee, Saviour, thee the nation's vows confess,
And, never satisfied with seeing, bless:
Swift unbespoken pomps thy steps proclaim,
And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.
How long wilt thou the general joy detain,
Starve and defraud the people of thy reign!
Content ingloriously to pass thy days
Like one of virtue's fools that feed on praise;

Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
Grow stale, and tarnish with our daily sight!
Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be
Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the tree.
Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,
Some lucky revolution of their fate:
Whose motions if we watch and guide with skill,
(For human good depends on human will,)
Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
And from the first impression takes the bent:
But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like wind,
And leaves repenting folly far behind.
Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize,
And spreads her locks before her as she flies.
Had thus old David, from whose loins you spring,
Not dar'd when fortune call'd him to be king,
At Gath an exile he might still remain,
And heaven's anointing oil had been in vain.
Let his successful youth your hopes engage;
But shun the example of declining age:
Behold him setting in his western skies,
The shadows lengthening as the vapours rise.
He is not now, as when on Jordan's sand
The joyful people throng'd to see him land,
Covering the beach, and blackening all the strand;
But, like the prince of angels, from his height
Comes tumbling downward with diminish'd light:
Betray'd by one poor plot to public scorn:
(Our only blessing since his curst return):
Those heaps of people which one sheaf did bind,

Blown off and scatter'd by a puff of wind.
What strength can he to your designs oppose,
Naked of friends and round beset with foes?
If Pharaoh's doubtful succour he should use,
A foreign aid would more incense the Jews:
Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring;
Foment the war, but not support the king:
Nor would the royal party e'er unite
With Pharaoh's arms to assist the Jebusite;
Or if they should, their interest soon would break,
And with such odious aid make David weak.
All sorts of men by my successful arts,
Abhorring kings, estrange their alter'd hearts
From David's rule: and 'tis their general cry,
Religion, commonwealth, and liberty.
If you, as champion of the public good,
Add to their arms a chief of royal blood,
What may not Israel hope, and what applause
Might such a general gain by such a cause?
Not barren praise alone, that gaudy flower
Fair only to the sight, but solid power:
And nobler is a limited command,
Given by the love of all your native land,
Than a successive title, long and dark,
Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's ark.
  What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,
When flattery soothes, and when ambition blinds?
Desire of power, on earth a vicious weed,
Yet sprung from high is of celestial seed:
In God 'tis glory; and when men aspire,

'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.
The ambitious youth too covetous of fame,
Too full of angel's metal in his frame,
Unwarily was led from virtue's ways, [praise.
Made drunk with honour, and debauch'd with
Half loath, and half consenting to the ill,
For royal blood within him struggled still,
He thus replied.—And what pretence have I
To take up arms for public liberty?
My father governs with unquestion'd right;
The faith's defender, and mankind's delight;
Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws;
And heaven by wonders has espous'd his cause.
Whom has he wrong'd in all his peaceful reign?
Who sues for justice to his throne in vain?
What millions has he pardon'd of his foes,
Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose?
Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good;
Inclin'd to mercy, and averse from blood,
If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,
His crime is God's beloved attribute.
What could he gain his people to betray,
Or change his right for arbitrary sway?
Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign
His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train.
If David's rule Jerusalem displease,
The dogstar heats their brains to this disease.
Why then should I, encouraging the bad,
Turn rebel and run popularly mad?
Were he a tyrant, who, by lawless might

Oppress'd the Jews, and rais'd the Jebusite,
Well might I mourn; but nature's holy bands
Would curb my spirits and restrain my hands:
The people might assert their liberty;
But what was right in them were crime in me.
His favour leaves me nothing to require,
Prevents my wishes, and outruns desire;
What more can I expect while David lives?
All but his kingly diadem he gives:
And that—But there he paus'd; then sighing, said—
Is justly destin'd for a worthier head.
For when my father from his toils shall rest,
And late augment the number of the blest,
His lawful issue shall the throne ascend,
Or the collateral line, where that shall end.
His brother, though oppress'd with vulgar spite,
Yet dauntless, and secure of native right,
Of every royal virtue stands possest;
Still dear to all the bravest and the best.
His courage foes, his friends his truth proclaim;
His loyalty the king, the world his fame.
His mercy e'en the offending crowd will find;
For sure he comes of a forgiving kind.
Why should I then repine at heaven's decree,
Which gives me no pretence to royalty?
Yet oh that fate propitiously inclin'd,
Had rais'd my birth, or had debas'd my mind;
To my large soul not all her treasure lent,
And then betray'd it to a mean descent!
I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,

And David's part disdains my mother's mould.
Why am I scanted by a niggard birth?
My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth;
And, made for empire, whispers me within,
Desire of greatness is a godlike sin.
Him staggering so, when hell's dire agent found,
While fainting virtue scarce maintain'd her ground,
He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies:
The eternal God, supremely good and wise,
Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain:
What wonders are reserv'd to bless your reign,
Against your will your arguments have shown
Such virtue's only given to guide a throne.
Not that your father's mildness I contemn;
But manly force becomes the diadem.
'Tis true he grants the people all they crave;
And more perhaps, than subjects ought to have:
For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame,
And more his goodness than his wit proclaim.
But when should people strive their bonds to break,
If not when kings are negligent or weak?
Let him give on till he can give no more,
The thrifty Sanhedrim shall keep him poor;
And every shekel, which he can receive,
Shall cost a limb of his prerogative.
To ply him with new plots shall be my care;
Or plunge him deep in some expensive war;
Which when his treasure can no more supply,
He must, with the remains of kingship, buy
His faithful friends, our jealousies and fears

Call Jebusites, and Pharaoh's pensioners;
Whom when our fury from his aid has torn,
He shall be naked left to public scorn.
The next successor, whom I fear and hate,
My arts have made obnoxious to the state;
Turn'd all his virtues to his overthrow,
And gain'd our elders to pronounce a foe.
His right, for sums of necessary gold,
Shall first be pawn'd, and afterwards be sold;
Till time shall ever-wanting David draw,
To pass your doubtful title into law:
If not, the people have a right supreme
To make their kings; for kings are made for them.
All empire is no more than power in trust,
Which, when resum'd, can be no longer just.
Succession, for the general good design'd,
In its own wrong a nation cannot bind;
If altering that the people can relieve,
Better one suffer than a nation grieve.
The Jews well know their power: ere Saul they chose,
God was their king, and God they durst depose.
Urge now your piety, your filial name,
A father's right, and fear of future fame;
The public good, that universal call,
To which e'en heaven submitted, answers all.
Nor let his love enchant your generous mind;
'Tis nature's trick to propagate her kind.
Our fond begetters, who would never die,
Love but themselves in their posterity.
Or let his kindness by the effects be tried,

Or let him lay his vain pretence aside.
God said, he lov'd your father; could he bring
A better proof, than to anoint him king?
It surely show'd he lov'd the shepherd well,
Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.
Would David have you thought his darling son?
What means he then to alienate the crown?
The name of godly he may blush to bear:
Is't after God's own heart to cheat his heir?
He to his brother gives supreme command,
To you a legacy of barren land:
Perhaps the old harp, on which he thrums his lays,
Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise.
Then the next heir, a prince severe and wise,
Already looks on you with jealous eyes;
Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,
And marks your progress in the people's hearts;
Though now his mighty soul its grief contains:
He meditates revenge who least complains;
And like a lion, slumbering in the way,
Or sleep dissembling, while he waits his prey,
His fearless foes within his distance draws,
Constrains his roaring, and contracts his paws;
Till at the last his time for fury found,
He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground;
The prostrate vulgar passes o'er and spares,
But with a lordly rage his hunters tears.
Your case no tame expedients will afford:
Resolve on death, or conquest by the sword,
Which for no less a stake than life you draw;

And self-defence is nature's eldest law.
Leave the warm people no considering time:
For then rebellion may be thought a crime.
Avail yourself of what occasion gives,
But try your title while your father lives:
And that your arms may have a fair pretence,
Proclaim you take them in the king's defence;
Whose sacred life each minute would expose
To plots, from seeming friends, and secret foes.
And who can sound the depth of David's soul?
Perhaps his fear his kindness may control.
He fears his brother, though he loves his son,
For plighted vows too late to be undone.
If so, by force he wishes to be gain'd:
Like women's lechery to seem constrain'd.
Doubt not: but, when he most affects the frown,
Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.
Secure his person to secure your cause:
They who possess the prince possess the laws.
He said, and this advice above the rest,
With Absalom's mild nature suited best;
Unblam'd for life, ambition set aside,
Not stain'd with cruelty, nor puft with pride.
How happy had he been, if destiny
Had higher plac'd his birth, or not so high!
His kingly virtues might have claim'd a throne,
And blest all other countries but his own.
But charming greatness since so few refuse,
'Tis juster to lament him than accuse.
Strong were his hopes a rival to remove,

With blandishments to gain the public love:
To head the faction while their zeal was hot,
And popularly prosecute the plot.
To further this, Achitophel unites
The malcontents of all the Israelites:
Whose differing parties he could wisely join,
For several ends, to serve the same design.
The best, and of the princes some were such,
Who thought the power of monarchy too much;
Mistaken men, and patriots in their hearts;
Not wicked, but seduc'd by impious arts.
By these the springs of property were bent,
And wound so high, they crack'd the government.
The next for interest sought to embroil the state,
To sell their duty at a dearer rate;
And make their Jewish markets of the throne;
Pretending public good to serve their own.
Others thought kings a useless heavy load,
Who cost too much, and did too little good.
These were for laying honest David by,
On principles of pure good husbandry.
With them join'd all the haranguers of the throng,
That thought to get preferment by the tongue.
Who follow next a double danger bring,
Not only hating David, but the king;
The Solymæan rout; well vers'd of old,
In godly faction, and in treason bold;
Cowering and quaking at a conqueror's sword;
But lofty to a lawful prince restor'd;
Saw with disdain an Ethnic plot begun,

And scorn'd by Jebusites to be outdone.
Hot Levites headed these; who pull'd before
From the ark, which in the Judges' days they bore,
Resum'd their cant, and with a zealous cry
Pursued their old beloved Theocracy:
Where Sanhedrim and priest enslav'd the nation,
And justified their spoils by inspiration:
For who so fit to reign as Aaron's race,
If once dominion they could found in grace!
These led the pack; though not of surest scent,
Yet deepest mouth'd against the government.
A numerous host of dreaming saints succeed,
Of the true old enthusiastic breed:
'Gainst form and order they their power employ,
Nothing to build, and all things to destroy.
But far more numerous was the herd of such,
Who think too little, and who talk too much.
These out of mere instinct, they knew not why,
Ador'd their fathers' God and property;
And by the same blind benefit of fate
The devil and the Jebusite did hate:
Born to be sav'd, even in their own despite,
Because they could not help believing right.
Such were the tools: but a whole Hydra more
Remains of sprouting heads too long to score.
Some of their chiefs were princes of the land;
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;

Was every thing by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:
So over violent, or over civil,
That every man with him was God or Devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late;
He had his jest, and they had his estate.
He laugh'd himself from court; then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
For, spite of him, the weight of business fell
On Absalom and wise Achitophel:
Thus, wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left.

Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse
Of lords, below the dignity of verse.
Wits, warriors, commonwealth's-men, were the best:
Kind husbands, and mere nobles, all the rest.
And therefore, in the name of dulness, be

550 *Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon*] Schænobates, augur, medicus, magus, omnia novit. *J. W.*

The well hung Balaam and cold Caleb free:
And canting Nadab let oblivion damn,
Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb.
Let friendship's holy band some names assure;
Some their own worth, and some let scorn secure.
Nor shall the rascal rabble here have place,
Whom kings no titles gave, and God no grace:
Not bull-fac'd Jonas, who could statutes draw

574 *cold Caleb*] Lord Grey, who was childless. MS. note by Mr. Luttrell. *M.*

575 *And canting Nadab let oblivion damn,*
Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb]
Nadab is Lord Howard of Escrick, who took the sacrament in lamb's wool. MS. note by Mr. Luttrell. *M.*

Ford, Lord Grey of Werk, was strongly attached to the Duke of Monmouth, a zealous promoter of Lord Shaftesbury's measures, and a constant opponent of the court. He was a smooth talker, possessed of a large estate, both which accomplishments gave him influence among the people. Being concerned in the Ryehouse plot, he was arrested, and examined before the privy-council, who ordered him to the Tower; but when the messenger, who had the care of him, brought him thither, the gates were shut, it being late, and they could not get in; so that they spent the whole night together, and drank pretty freely. In the morning they came to the Tower again very early, the doors not being as yet opened; and his keeper, who was very drunk, falling asleep, he turned down towards the wharf, and taking oars, got off to Holland. Here he joined his old friend Monmouth, whom he contributed to spirit up to the rebellion in the ensuing reign, that brought that unhappy nobleman to the block.

581 *Jonas, who could statutes draw*] Sir William Jones. He drew the Habeas Corpus act. MS. Luttrell. *M.*

To mean rebellion, and make treason law.
But he, though bad, is follow'd by a worse,
The wretch who heaven's anointed dar'd to curse;
Shimei, whose youth did early promise bring
Of zeal to God and hatred to his king;
Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,
And never broke the sabbath, but for gain:
Nor was he ever known an oath to vent,
Or curse, unless against the government.
Thus heaping wealth, by the most ready way
Among the Jews, which was to cheat and pray:
The city, to reward his pious hate
Against his master, chose him magistrate.
His hand a vare of justice did uphold;
His neck was loaded with a chain of gold.

585 *Shimei, whose youth did early promise bring*
Of zeal to God and hatred to his king]

Shimei, Slingsby Bethel, esq. by poll chosen one of the sheriffs for the city of London, on Midsummer-day, 1680, was a zealous fanatic, and had been formerly one of the committee of safety; however, to render himself fit for his office, he received the sacrament, and renounced the covenant, but not his factious principles. Burnet calls him a man of knowledge, and says he wrote a learned book about the interest of princes; but that his miserable way of living, and miserly disposition, was very prejudicial to his party, and rendered him disagreeable to every body.

594 *Against his master, chose him magistrate*] Sheriff. MS. Luttrell. *M.*

595 *a vare of justice*] Thus the first edition.—Derrick reads *vase*; but see Howel's Letters, p. 161. ed. 1726. 'Vara' is Spanish for a wand.

During his office treason was no crime ;
The sons of Belial had a glorious time :
For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,
Yet lov'd his wicked neighbour as himself.
When two or three were gather'd to declaim
Against the monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them :
And if they curs'd the king when he was by,
Would rather curse than break good company.
If any durst his factious friends accuse,
He pack'd a jury of dissenting Jews ;
Whose fellow-feeling in the godly cause
Would free the suffering saint from human laws.
For laws are only made to punish those
Who serve the king, and to protect his foes.
If any leisure time he had from power,
(Because 'tis sin to misemploy an hour,)
His business was, by writing to persuade,
That kings were useless, and a clog to trade :
And, that his noble style he might refine,
No Rechabite more shunn'd the fumes of wine.
Chaste were his cellars, and his shrieval board
The grossness of a city feast abhorr'd :
His cooks with long disuse their trade forgot ;

614 *His business was, by writing to persuade,* &c.] See his 'Interest of the several Protestant Powers.' MS. note by Mr. Luttrell. *M.*

618 *Chaste were his cellars, and his shrieval board,* &c.] He kept a very poor and scandalous shrievaltry. MS. note by Mr. Luttrell. *M.*

Cool was his kitchen, though his brains were hot.
Such frugal virtue malice may accuse;
But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews:
For towns, once burnt, such magistrates require
As dare not tempt God's providence by fire.
With spiritual food he fed his servants well,
But free from flesh that made the Jews rebel:
And Moses' laws he held in more account,
For forty days of fasting in the mount.
To speak the rest who better are forgot,
Would tire a well-breath'd witness of the plot.
Yet, Corah, thou shalt from oblivion pass;
Erect thyself, thou monumental brass,
High as the serpent of thy metal made,
While nations stand secure beneath thy shade.
What, though his birth were base, yet comets rise
From earthly vapours, ere they shine in skies.
Prodigious actions may as well be done
By weaver's issue, as by prince's son.
This arch-attestor for the public good
By that one deed ennobles all his blood.
Who ever ask'd the witnesses' high race,
Whose oath with martyrdom did Stephen grace?
Ours was a Levite, and as times went then,
His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen.
Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither choleric was nor proud:

639 *By weaver's issue*, &c.] Titus Oates was the son of a weaver. MS. note by Mr. Luttrell. *M.*

His long chin prov'd his wit; his saint-like grace
A church vermilion, and a Moses' face.
His memory, miraculously great,
Could plots, exceeding man's belief, repeat;
Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
For human wit could never such devise.
Some future truths are mingled in his book;
But where the witness fail'd, the prophet spoke:
Some things like visionary flights appear;
The spirit caught him up the Lord knows where;
And gave him his rabbinical degree,
Unknown to foreign university.
His judgment yet his memory did excel;
Which piec'd his wondrous evidence so well,
And suited to the temper of the times,
Then groaning under Jebusitic crimes.
Let Israel's foes suspect his heavenly call,
And rashly judge his writ apocryphal;
Our laws for such affronts have forfeits made:
He takes his life who takes away his trade.
Were I myself in witness Corah's place,
The wretch who did me such a dire disgrace,
Should whet my memory, though once forgot,
To make him an appendix of my plot.
His zeal to heaven made him his prince despise,
And load his person with indignities.
But zeal peculiar privilege affords,

659 *Unknown to foreign university*] He pretended to have taken a degree at Salamanca. MS. note by Mr. Luttrell. *M.*

Indulging latitude to deeds and words:
And Corah might for Agag's murder call,
In terms as coarse as Samuel us'd to Saul.
What others in his evidence did join,
The best that could be had for love or coin,
In Corah's own predicament will fall:
For witness is a common name to all.

Surrounded thus with friends of every sort,
Deluded Absalom forsakes the court:
Impatient of high hopes, urg'd with renown,
And fir'd with near possession of a crown.
The admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise,

676 *And Corah might for Agag's murder call*] Agag, 'Sir Edmondsbury Godfrey, was a man of a very good character, of a reserved melancholy turn of mind, an enemy to all persecution, and rather a protector than prosecutor of Nonconformists. He had, with reluctance, received Oates's information. As to the report that prevailed of his having been murdered by the papists, because their violent enemy, it was without any manner of foundation, for he was upon good terms with the party in general. It has been affirmed, that he hanged himself in his own house, and that his two brothers, who were his next heirs, had the body conveyed abroad, and the sword run through it, that so it might be thought he was assassinated, and the crown thereby prevented from seizing on his effects.' *Burnet, Echard, Smollett.* D.

686 *The admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise,*
And on his goodly person feed their eyes.]

Here the poet describes the tour taken by the Duke of Monmouth after his return from Holland, without the king's leave, and with the advice of Shaftesbury, to whose councils he had fatally resigned himself. This progress, he justly observes, though couched under the notion of its being made for hunting, and the diversions of the country, was, in reality,

And on his goodly person feed their eyes.
His joy conceal'd, he sets himself to show;
On each side bowing popularly low:

to try how the people stood affected; whether the suspicions against the queen and the Duke of York were sufficiently inculcated, to give Monmouth an opportunity of mounting the throne, in case of the king's death; and his ambition he disguised under the specious pretences of his being the king's lawful son, whose right was suppressed to make way for an uncle's usurpation; of his being the avowed champion of the Protestant religion, and the only one of the royal family who had the courage openly to declare himself an enemy to popery and slavery.

With regard to the make and outward graces of Monmouth's person, (says Grammont,) nature never formed a man more complete. Every feature of his face had a peculiar delicacy, and altogether exhibited a countenance, beautiful without effeminacy, manly, yet not robust. His body was finely formed; he was extremely agile, fenced admirably, and was one of the best horsemen of his time; but he had a soul very unequal to such a tenement. He had no sentiments of his own; his voice was pleasing; his manner of expressing himself captivating; but these accomplishments were used only to deliver the thoughts and words of other people. He was rash in his undertakings; irresolute and uncertain in the execution; abject and cowering in distress; he begged his life of James II. with tears in his eyes. That monarch treated his sorrow slightly; the queen insulted it. When he found he had no hopes of life, he assumed an air of philosophic calmness, and met death with indifference. He was brave in the field, felt for the distresses of humanity, was kind to his inferiors, and naturally very generous. With these virtues he might have proved a friend to his country, and a pillar of the throne, had fortune thrown him into the hands of honest men; for his ruin was owing to his connexions, not to himself. *D*

His looks, his gestures, and his words he frames,
And with familiar ease repeats their names.
Thus form'd by nature, furnish'd out with arts,
He glides unfelt into their secret hearts.
Then, with a kind compassionating look,
And sighs, bespeaking pity ere he spoke,
Few words he said; but easy those and fit,
More slow than Hybla-drops, and far more sweet.
I mourn, my countrymen, your lost estate;
Though far unable to prevent your fate:
Behold a banish'd man for your dear cause
Expos'd a prey to arbitrary laws!
Yet oh! that I alone could be undone,
Cut off from empire, and no more a son!
Now all your liberties a spoil are made;
Egypt and Tyrus intercept your trade,
And Jebusites your sacred rites invade.
My father, whom with reverence yet I name,
Charm'd into ease, is careless of his fame;
And, brib'd with petty sums of foreign gold,
Is grown in Bathsheba's embraces old;
Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys;
And all his power against himself employs.
He gives, and let him give, my right away:
But why should he his own and yours betray?
He, only he, can make the nation bleed,
And he alone from my revenge is freed.
Take then my tears, with that he wip'd his eyes,
'Tis all the aid my present power supplies:
No court-informer can these arms accuse;

These arms may sons against their fathers use:
And 'tis my wish, the next successor's reign
May make no other Israelite complain.
Youth, beauty, graceful action seldom fail;
But common interest always will prevail:
And pity never ceases to be shown
To him who makes the people's wrongs his own.
The crowd, that still believe their kings oppress,
With lifted hands their young Messiah bless:
Who now begins his progress to ordain
With chariots, horsemen, and a numerous train:
From east to west his glories he displays,
And, like the sun, the promis'd land surveys.
Fame runs before him as the morning-star,
And shouts of joy salute him from afar:
Each house receives him as a guardian god,
And consecrates the place of his abode.
But hospitable treats did most commend
Wise Issachar, his wealthy western friend.
This moving court, that caught the people's eyes,
And seem'd but pomp, did other ends disguise:
Achitophel had form'd it, with intent
To sound the depths, and fathom where it went,

[738] *wealthy western friend*] Issachar was Thomas Thynne, esq. ancestor of the Marquis of Bath, one of the most opulent commoners in the kingdom, and therefore usually called Tom of Ten Thousand. He had once been a favourite of the Duke of York, but he afterwards magnificently entertained the Duke of Monmouth and all his attendants, when he made a progress into the west, at his noble house at Longleat.
Dr. J. W.

The people's hearts, distinguish friends from foes;
And try their strength, before they came to blows.
Yet all was colour'd with a smooth pretence
Of specious love, and duty to their prince.
Religion, and redress of grievances,
Two names that always cheat, and always please,
Are often urg'd; and good king David's life
Endanger'd by a brother and a wife.
Thus in a pageant show a plot is made;
And peace itself is war in masquerade.
Oh foolish Israel! never warn'd by ill!
Still the same bait, and circumvented still!
Did ever men forsake their present ease,
In midst of health imagine a disease;
Take pains contingent mischiefs to foresee,
Make heirs for monarchs, and for God decree?
What shall we think? Can people give away,
Both for themselves and sons their native sway?
Then they are left defenceless to the sword
Of each unbounded, arbitrary lord:
And laws are vain, by which we right enjoy,
If kings unquestion'd can those laws destroy.
Yet if the crowd be judge of fit and just,
And kings are only officers in trust,
Then this resuming covenant was declar'd
When kings were made, or is for ever barr'd.
If those who gave the sceptre could not tie
By their own deed their own posterity,
How then could Adam bind his future race?
How could his forfeit on mankind take place?

Or how could heavenly justice damn us all,
Who ne'er consented to our father's fall?
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,
And tenants to their people's pleasure stand.
Add, that the power for property allow'd
Is mischievously seated in the crowd:
For who can be secure of private right,
If sovereign sway may be dissolv'd by might?
Nor is the people's judgment always true:
The most may err as grossly as the few?
And faultless kings run down by common cry,
For vice, oppression, and for tyranny.
What standard is there in a fickle rout,
Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out?
Nor only crowds but Sanhedrims may be
Infected with this public lunacy,
And share the madness of rebellious times,
To murder monarchs for imagin'd crimes.
If they may give and take whene'er they please,
Not kings alone, the Godhead's images,
But government itself at length must fall
To nature's state, where all have right to all.
Yet grant our lords the people kings can make,
What prudent men a settled throne would shake?
For whatsoe'er their sufferings were before,
That change they covet makes them suffer more.
All other errors but disturb a state;
But innovation is the blow of fate.
If ancient fabrics nod, and threat to fall,
To patch their flaws, and buttress up the wall,

Thus far 'tis duty: but here fix the mark:
For all beyond it is to touch the ark.
To change foundations, cast the frame anew,
Is work for rebels, who base ends pursue;
At once divine and human laws control,
And mend the parts by ruin of the whole.
The tampering world is subject to this curse,
To physic their disease into a worse.

Now what relief can righteous David bring?
How fatal 'tis to be too good a king!
Friends he has few, so high the madness grows,
Who dare be such must be the people's foes.
Yet some there were, e'en in the worst of days;
Some let me name, and naming is to praise.

In this short file Barzillai first appears;
Barzillai, crown'd with honour and with years.
Long since, the rising rebels he withstood

817 *In this short file*] For honour, integrity, consistency, greatness of mind, benevolence, and justice, the Duke of Ormond, Barzillai, seems to be the very first and most eminent character that ever adorned the English nobility. *Dr. J. W.*

819 ——— *the rising rebels he withstood*
In region's waste beyond the Jordan's flood]

The Duke of Ormond adhered zealously to the interest of his sovereign Charles I. in Ireland, where, being chief of a noble, ancient, and wealthy family, his power and influence were, as long as possible, exerted against the arms of Cromwell. But being at length obliged to yield to the necessity of the times, he quitted that kingdom, and accompanied King Charles II. in his exile. After the restoration, he was at one and the same time lord lieutenant of Ireland, steward of the household, groom of the stole, and privy-counsellor for the

In regions waste beyond the Jordan's flood:
Unfortunately brave to buoy the state;
But sinking underneath his master's fate:
In exile with his godlike prince he mourn'd;
For him he suffer'd, and with him return'd.
The court he practis'd, not the courtier's art:
Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart.
Which well the noblest objects knew to choose,
The fighting warrior, and recording muse.
His bed could once a fruitful issue boast;
Now more than half a father's name is lost.
His eldest hope, with every grace adorn'd,
By me, so heaven will have it, always mourn'd,
And always honour'd, snatch'd in manhood's prime
By unequal fates, and providence's crime;
Yet not before the goal of honour won,
All parts fulfill'd of subject and of son:

three kingdoms. Perhaps no man was ever better beloved, and no man deserved it better: he was liberal, brave, loyal, and sincere; a friend to the constitution, and a protector of the Protestants. On this account he was no favourite in the succeeding reign, and died in retirement, without post or employment, July, 1688, aged seventy-nine. *D.*

831 *His eldest hope, with every grace adorn'd*] Thomas Earl of Ossory, Baron Butler of More-Park by writ, eldest son of the aforesaid duke, and one of the most gallant noblemen of his time. He behaved with great bravery in the first Dutch war, under Sir Edward Spragg; and in the second was rear-admiral of the blue. He was a courageous warrior, a prudent counsellor, a dutiful son, a kind friend, a liberal patron, and a generous man. He died universally lamented in 1680. *D.*

Swift was the race, but short the time to run.
Oh narrow circle, but of power divine,
Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line!
By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known,
Arms thy delight, and war was all thy own:
Thy force infus'd the fainting Tyrians propp'd:
And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopp'd.
Oh ancient honour! Oh unconquer'd hand,
Whom foes unpunish'd never could withstand!
But Israel was unworthy of his name;
Short is the date of all immoderate fame.
It looks as heaven our ruin had design'd,
And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind.
Now, free from earth, thy disencumber'd soul
Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry pole:
From thence thy kindred legions mayst thou bring,
To aid the guardian angel of thy king.
Here stop, my muse, here cease thy painful flight:
No pinions can pursue immortal height:
Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,

842 *Thy force infus'd the fainting Tyrians propp'd:*
And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopp'd.]
Lord Ossory having married a Dutch lady, lived some time in Holland, and was of signal service in preventing the progress of the French arms, by his knowledge and advice. *D.*

846 *But Israel was unworthy of* his name;
Short is the date of all immoderate fame.
In the first edition we find
But Israel was unworthy of *thy birth*,
Short is the date of all immoderate *worth*. * *

And tell thy soul she should have fled before:
Or fled she with his life, and left this verse
To hang on her departed patron's hearse?
Now take thy steepy flight from heaven, and see
If thou canst find on earth another he:
Another he would be too hard to find;
See then whom thou canst see not far behind.
Zadoc the priest, whom, shunning power and place,
His lowly mind advanc'd to David's grace.
With him the Sagan of Jerusalem,

858 ——— *and left this verse*
To hang on her departed patron's hearse?]

This alludes to the custom of affixing poems to the pall or hearse. See Milton's Lat. Eleg. ii. 22. And his epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester, ver. 58, &c. *T.*

864 *the priest*] Sancroft (Zadoc) was advanced from the deanery of St. Paul's to the see of Canterbury. He had considerable learning, but was a man of solemn and sullen gravity and deportment. He seldom mixed in company, but led a strict and ascetic life. He lived unmarried, and rather encouraged celibacy in his clergy. He was so cold, reserved, and peevish, that few loved him. He died in a state of separation from the church, but had not the courage to own it. His death, says Burnet, ought to have put an end to the schism that some were endeavouring to raise, on the pretence that a parliamentary deprivation was never to be allowed, and therefore they looked on Sancroft as the archbishop still, and reckoned Tillotson a usurper.

Dr. J. W.

866 *the Sagan of Jerusalem*] This was Compton, brother to the Earl of Northampton. Having carried arms for some years, he was past thirty when he took orders. He applied himself more to his function than bishops, says Burnet, had commonly done. His preaching was without much life

Of hospitable soul, and noble stem;
Him of the western dome, whose weighty sense
Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence.
The prophets' sons, by such example led,
To learning and to loyalty were bred:
For colleges on bounteous kings depend,
And never rebel was to arts a friend.
To these succeed the pillars of the laws;
Who best can plead, and best can judge a cause.
Next them a train of loyal peers ascend;
Sharp-judging Adriel, the muses' friend.

or learning. He was a great patron of the converts from popery, and of those protestants, whom the bad usage they were beginning to meet with in France, drove over to us. The Duke of York hated him. This was the bishop that carried the princess Anne to Nottingham, in order to join the party of the Prince of Orange. *Dr. J. W.*

868 *Him of the western*] This was Dolben, who was bishop of Rochester, and succeeded Sterne in the archbishopric of York; a man, says Burnet, of more spirit than discretion, an excellent preacher, but of a free conversation, which laid him open to much censure in a vicious court. During the rebellion he bore arms, and was made a major by Charles I. *Dr. J. W.*

877 *Sharp-judging Adriel*] Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, Adriel, was a man of a fine person, elegant manners, and insinuating address. When they were both young, he paid his address to Queen Anne, and to prevent a connexion Charles II. is said to have contrived a cruel and unjustifiable scheme of sending him to Tangiers in a ship so crazy as to have drowned him. He was always firm in his attachment to James II., for which, with great liberality, King William once commended him, and after some years took him into favour, and gave him a pension of £3000 a year. He was

Himself a muse: in Sanhedrin's debate
True to his prince, but not a slave of state:
Whom David's love with honours did adorn,
That from his disobedient son were torn.
Jotham of piercing wit, and pregnant thought:
Endued by nature, and by learning taught,
To move assemblies, who but only tried

a man of wit and parts, not a genius. His poems are feeble and flimsy, notwithstanding Dryden has so profusely praised his Essay on Poetry. But the prose is terse, perspicuous, and elegant, and his memoirs so curious, that we must regret they were left unfinished. He imitated the Cæsars of the Emperor Julian, a capital piece of satire, equal to any part of Lucian, in a piece called the Assembly of the gods, where many contemporary princes are introduced. I cannot forbear mentioning a sly sarcasm on King William, to whom Jupiter himself is said to have shown great esteem; but was suspected a little of some partiality, on account of his own proceeding with old father Saturn. *Dr. J. W.*

[882] *of piercing wit*] The Marquis of Halifax, Jotham, was, in Hume's opinion, the man who possessed the finest genius and most extensive capacity of all employed in public affairs, by Charles II. Hume is of opinion, that the many variations he was guilty of in his political conduct, for he voted first for the exclusion bill, then for limitations, then for expedients, and was then on good terms with the duke, might be the effects of his integrity, rather than of his ambition. Lord Orford, in his Noble Authors, vol. ii. p. 86, is of a very different opinion. He wrote many pamphlets on topics then agitated, now forgotten. His Advice to a Daughter is still read. Notwithstanding the great change of manners, it would be amusing to compare it with Mrs. Hannah More's Strictures. His moral, political, and miscellaneous thoughts are full of penetration and a deep knowledge of men and manners. *Dr. J. W.*

The worse awhile, then chose the better side:
Nor chose alone, but turn'd the balance too;
So much the weight of one brave man can do.
Hushai, the friend of David in distress;
In public storms, of manly steadfastness:
By foreign treaties he inform'd his youth,
And join'd experience to his native truth.
His frugal care supplied the wanting throne;
Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own:
'Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow;
But hard the task to manage well the low:

888 *Hushai, the friend of David in distress*] Laurence Hyde, second son to Edward the great Earl of Clarendon, was advanced to the earldom of Rochester, and made treasurer in 1682, but removed from the treasury in 1684, to the office of president of the council, a post of more rank but less advantage, which gave the lively Marquis of Halifax occasion to say, that 'he had heard of many people being kicked down stairs, but the Earl of Rochester was the first he had ever known kicked up.' He was incorrupt, sincere, warm, and violent; writ well, but not a graceful speaker, though smooth and plausible. He defended his father in the house of commons with strength of argument, and power of elocution, that showed him master of great abilities; and yet with so much decency and discretion, as not to embroil himself with his opponents. Through the whole of King Charles's reign, he deported himself with so much real fidelity to his master, and such prudence, that he was not particularly pointed at, or ridiculed by any party. *D.*

890 *By foreign treaties he inform'd his youth*] In 1676 he went on an embassy to Poland, was one of the plenipotentiaries at the treaty of Nimeguen, and afterwards ambassador in Holland, where he acquitted himself with honour. He was strongly against the bill of exclusion. *D.*

For sovereign power is too depress'd or high,
When kings are forc'd to sell, or crowds to buy.
Indulge one labour more, my weary muse,
For Amiel: who can Amiel's praise refuse?
Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet
In his own worth, and without title great:
The Sanhedrim long time as chief he rul'd,
Their reason guided, and their passion cool'd:
So dexterous was he in the crown's defence,
So form'd to speak a loyal nation's sense,
That, as their band was Israel's tribes in small,
So fit was he to represent them all.
Now rasher charioteers the seat ascend,
Whose loose careers his steady skill commend:
They, like the unequal ruler of the day,
Misguide the seasons, and mistake the way:
While he withdrawn at their mad labours smiles,
And safe enjoys the sabbath of his toils.

These were the chief, a small but faithful band
Of worthies, in the breach who dar'd to stand,

899 *who can Amiel's praise*] Sir Edward Seymour, Amiel, was a man of high birth, being the elder branch of that family, of great boldness, vivacity of parts, and a graceful manner, though of insufferable pride. Burnet says, he was the first speaker of the house of commons that was not bred to the law. He knew the house and every man in it so well, that by looking about he could tell the fate of any question. Charles II. loved him personally, though he frequently voted against his measures. But once having voted for the court, the king said to him, 'You were not against me to-day.' He immediately answered—'No, Sir, I was against my conscience to-day.' *Dr. J. W.*

And tempt the united fury of the land,
With grief they view'd such powerful engines bent,
To batter down the lawful government.
A numerous faction, with pretended frights,
In Sanhedrims to plume the regal rights;
The true successor from the court remov'd;
The plot, by hireling witnesses, improv'd.
These ills they saw, and, as their duty bound,
They show'd the king the danger of the wound;
That no concessions from the throne would please,
But lenitives fomented the disease:
That Absalom, ambitious of the crown,
Was made the lure to draw the people down:
That false Achitophel's pernicious hate
Had turn'd the plot to ruin church and state:
The council violent, the rabble worse:
That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse.

With all these loads of injuries opprest,
And long revolving in his careful breast
The event of things, at last his patience tir'd,
Thus, from his royal throne, by heaven inspir'd,
The god-like David spoke; with awful fear
His train their Maker in their master hear.

Thus long have I, by native mercy sway'd,
My wrongs dissembled, my revenge delay'd:
So willing to forgive the offending age;
So much the father did the king assuage.
But now so far my clemency they slight,
The offenders question my forgiving right:

That one was made for many, they contend;
But 'tis to rule; for that's a monarch's end.
They call my tenderness of blood my fear:
Though manly tempers can the longest bear.
Yet, since they will divert my native course,
'Tis time to show I am not good by force.
Those heap'd affronts that haughty subjects bring,
Are burdens for a camel, not a king.
Kings are the public pillars of the state,
Born to sustain and prop the nation's weight:
If my young Samson will pretend a call
To shake the column, let him share the fall:
But oh, that yet he would repent and live!
How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!
With how few tears a pardon might be won
From nature, pleading for a darling son!
Poor pitied youth, by my paternal care,
Rais'd up to all the height his frame could bear!
Had God ordain'd his fate for empire born,
He would have given his soul another turn:
Gull'd with a patriot's name, whose modern sense
Is one that would by law supplant his prince;
The people's brave, the politician's tool;
Never was patriot yet, but was a fool.
Whence comes it, that religion and the laws
Should more be Absalom's than David's cause?
His old instructor, ere he lost his place,
Was never thought indued with so much grace.
Good heavens, how faction can a patriot paint!

My rebel ever proves my people's saint.
Would they impose an heir upon the throne!
Let Sanhedrims be taught to give their own.
A king's at least a part of government;
And mine as requisite as their consent;
Without my leave a future king to choose,
Infers a right the present to depose.
True, they petition me to approve their choice:
But Esau's hands suit ill with Jacob's voice.
My pious subjects for my safety pray;
Which to secure, they take my power away.
From plots and treasons heaven preserve my years
But save me most from my petitioners!
Unsatiate as the barren womb or grave;
God cannot grant so much as they can crave.
What then is left, but with a jealous eye
To guard the small remains of royalty!
The law shall still direct my peaceful sway,

991 *The law shall still direct*] We cannot read these words put into the mouth of Charles II. without a degree of just indignation, when we reflect on some striking transactions of his reign, particularly the appointment of that ministry called the Cabal.

All power in England, Scotland, and Ireland, was committed to six men. Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley Cooper, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, Lauderdale, and Roberts, the three last of whom had drawn their swords against the king's father. Clifford had raised himself by his great influence in the House of Commons; Ashley Cooper had still greater in the House of Lords: Arlington, notwithstanding his secret inclinations to popery, had maintained connexions with the dissenters. Buckingham, favouring all

And the same law teach rebels to obey:
Votes shall no more establish'd power control,
Such votes as make a part exceed the whole.
No groundless clamours shall my friends remove,
Nor crowds have power to punish ere they prove;
For Gods and godlike kings their care express,
Still to defend their servants in distress.
Oh, that my power to saving were confined!

sects, because he was of no religion himself, was a favourite of the dissenters; Lauderdale had great interest with the presbyterians of Scotland: and Shaftesbury and Buckingham were supported by the people, because they pretended a reverence for their rights. This ministry was the most extraordinary that ever was composed: for the king had an unconquerable distrust of Shaftesbury; though diverted with the humours of Buckingham, he was shocked with an advice which that duke had given him to procure a parliamentary divorce from the queen, and had once committed him to the Tower, for personal offences against himself. Arlington and Buckingham were mortal foes; and Buckingham, Shaftesbury, and Lauderdale, were averse from the influence of the Duke of York with his brother, because they thought it interfered with their own; or, at least, the Duke believed that they were so: but at the interview at Dover, the Duchess of Orleans reconciled Arlington and Buckingham, and the king to Buckingham, and knit the famous Cabal firmly together in the interests of the new alliance. See Echard and Dalrymple.

The melancholy fate of the Duchess of Orleans, after her return from Dover, supposed to have been by poison, ordered to be given her by her husband, who was jealous of her intimacy with her own brother, Charles II. is too well known, but we hope too atrocious to obtain credit. *Dr. J. W.*

Why am I forc'd, like heaven, against my mind,
To make examples of another kind!
Must I at length the sword of justice draw?
Oh curst effects of necessary law!
How ill my fear they by my mercy scan!
Beware the fury of a patient man.
Law they require, let law then show her face;
They could not be content to look on Grace,
Her hinder parts, but with a daring eye
To tempt the terrors of her front and die.
By their own arts 'tis righteously decreed,
Those dire artificers of death shall bleed.
Against themselves their witnesses will swear,
'Till viper-like their mother plot they tear;
And suck for nutriment that bloody gore,
Which was their principle of life before.
Their Belial with their Beelzebub will fight;
Thus on my foes, my foes shall do me right.
Nor doubt the event: for factious crowds engage,
In their first onset, all their brutal rage.
Then let 'em take an unresisted course:
Retire, and traverse, and delude their force:
But, when they stand all breathless, urge the fight,
And rise upon them with redoubled might:
For lawful power is still superior found; [ground.
When long driven back at length it stands the

1012 *Against themselves their witnesses will swear*] Alluding to the inconsistencies and contradictions of Dr. Oates, Captain Bedloe, and other witnesses, made use of to support the credit of the Popish plot. *D.*

He said: The Almighty nodding gave consent;
And peals of thunder shook the firmament.
Henceforth a series of new time began,
The mighty years in long procession ran:
Once more the godlike David was restor'd,
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

END OF VOL. I.

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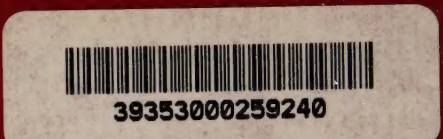
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